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Veritas

ARSOF in the Korean War: Part II



USASOC HISTORY









Cover Photo: 2nd Rangers man a M1919A6 light machine gun, 7th Infantry Division, X Corps in central Korea in 1951. Rear, then left to right: SFC Jack Murphy, Burgaw, NC (pointing), SFC Earl Johnson, Jackson, MI, SGT Cleveland Valrey, Berkeley, CA (gunner), and PFC James R. Murray, Paris, KY.

Veritas

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The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office

In the last journal I announced that the first issue covering Army SOF in Korea, 1950-1953, had grown too large and we were dividing the topic into two issues. *Veritas* 1:2010 generated so much interest from SOF Korean War veterans that merited epilogues about what has been written, it seemed fitting to devote the entire year to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the start of what became the Cold War's first major conflict. Thus, the Army SOF disaster relief & humanitarian assistance role during Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE in Haiti will not be presented until 2011.

This issue covers organization and training of the Airborne Ranger Infantry companies at Fort Benning, GA, the winter warfare training done at Camp Carson, CO, and details a combat action of each of the six Ranger Companies that served in the Korean War. The third issue will address tactical and strategic psychological warfare units which included the 1st Loudspeaker & Leaflet Company and the 1st Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group, assigned to Eighth U.S. Army and Far East Command, respectively plus the activation of the U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, NC. The personnel spaces resulting from the deactivation of the Airborne Ranger companies provided the manpower to form Special Forces in 1952. The fourth issue will explain the American elements that advised Korean partisans on both coasts and did intelligence collection with indigenous personnel, the 8240th Army Unit, a legacy unit of Special Forces, the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK) that recruited former Ranger, special operations, and airborne veterans, and CCRAK, the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities, Korea that tried to coordinate all SOF activities in-country.

Personnel turbulence among historians has us scrambling. Hiring qualified replacements via the Civilian Personnel System is a major time-consuming and often frustrating endeavor. A USSOCOM Manpower Survey team is validating personnel requirements (civilian government and contract employees) based on missions.

The International Academy of Visual Arts recognized *Veritas* by awarding it a Second Place Communicators Award for 2010 in the U.S. Government publication category—quite nice considering we have a two-person publications staff. *Veritas* is the flagship publication of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

The *Burma News* collection (CBI Theater WWII veterans newsletters) from the MARS Task Force Mountain Artillery Association members Willard B. "Woody" Woodruff, Connie Ness and Randall Colvin and David Kaufman's high quality scans of Ranger insignia used during the Korean War was greatly appreciated. For those "snow bird" veterans who change homes to enjoy warm winters and cool summers we can only accommodate one address for *Veritas* distribution. Count the names at the bottom of the page if that is not satisfactory, and you will see that we do not have the manpower to constantly change addresses on the mailing list. Thanks for the support. CHB

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Submissions: Submit manuscripts, art, illustrations, and photos to the address above. Digital format is preferred. All article submissions must cover ARSOF topics from WWII to the present, be based on primary sources, and have active participant voice. See articles in *Veritas* for examples. Please provide contact information for all submissions. If you have an article topic that falls outside these key parameters, please email one of our editors. The USASOC History Office reserves the right to edit all submissions for publication.

Command Historian and Editor:
Charles H. Briscoe, PhD, charles.briscoe@ahqb.soc.mil

Associate Editors:
Kenneth Finlayson, PhD, kenn.finlayson@ahqb.soc.mil
Troy J. Sacquety, PhD, sacquett@ahqb.soc.mil
Eugene G. Piasecki, eugene.g.piasecki@ahqb.soc.mil

Art Director:
Daniel W. Telles, tellesd@ahqb.soc.mil

Graphic Designer:
Laura Goddard, laura.goddard@ahqb.soc.mil

Photo Editor:
Earl J. Moniz, monize@ahqb.soc.mil

Illustrators:
Frank E. Allen, fallen1364@sbcglobal.net
Mariano Santillan, mariano@santillan.cc

Errata



"U.S. Army Medical Corps LTC Louis N. Altshuler" (*Veritas*: 6:1:2010): U.S. Army Medical Corps Major Louis N. Altshuler was a public health doctor in the Eighth Army Surgeon Office, Tokyo, until war broke out in Korea. In July 1950, he was assigned to the 8054th Evacuation Hospital in Pusan, Korea. After the UN breakout from the Pusan Perimeter in October 1950, newly promoted LTC Altshuler was attached to UN Civil Assistance Command and sent north to P'yongyang to assist COL Charles R. Munske, the CA Team leader detailed to reestablish government and rebuild infrastructure in the Communist capital. After the UN troops withdrew from North Korea in December 1950, Altshuler was instrumental in the establishment of hospitals and medical clinics for refugees resettled on Cheju-do (island) and internal medical training for the Communist prisoner of war population on Koje-do. LTC Altshuler was awarded the Bronze Star and a Legion of Merit for his distinguished contributions to public health during the war. After retiring as a Colonel in 1965, Dr. Altshuler taught at the U.S. Army Civil Affairs School, Fort Gordon, GA for almost ten years. During that period he served with LTC Loren E. Davis, former CA sub-team leader in Chinnamp'o during the Korean War. COL Altshuler was the father of MG Herbert L. "Buz" Altshuler, who was the Commanding General of U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) at Fort Bragg, NC from 2001 to 2007.



X Corps SSI (*Veritas* 6:1:2010): Shortly after Major General Edward M. Almond assumed command of the X Corps during the Korean War, he ostensibly directed that all personnel invert the X Corps SSI (shoulder sleeve insignia) on their uniforms. The undocumented rationale for this directive was to distinguish Korean War combat service from X Corps combat service in WWII. Whether the practice was continued by Major General Almond's successors, MG Clovis E. Byers, LTG William P. Palmer, and LTG Isaac D. White could not be determined. Veteran George J. Ellis, C Battery, 780th Field Artillery Battalion (8 inch), X Corps Artillery, provided this information. C Battery, 780th FAB was a U.S. Army Reserve unit from Roanoke, VA. Since we have not been able to verify General Almond's directive, the X Corps SSI shown in *Veritas* is the official depiction.



"Timeline" (*Veritas*: 6:1:2010): The reference to the B-29 Superfortress aircraft that carried the second atomic bomb should read as *"Bockscar."*

"A Clearer View of Psywar at Fort Riley & Fort Bragg, 1951-1952" (*Veritas*: 5:4:2009): 1LT Nevin F. Price, the Radio Officer, 5021st Psywar Detachment, Fort Riley, KS, and then Commander, 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group, Fort Riley and Fort Bragg, NC, did not arrive at Fort Riley until after the infamous July 1951 flood. LT Price began scrounging radio equipment and parts from surrounding military bases after the flood waters receded. He established a 5021st Radio Monitoring Center at Camp Forsyth on Fort Riley.

Timeline: 1950 - 1952

1950

25 June – North Korea invades South Korea. President Harry S. Truman responds by ordering U.S. military support to Korea.

August-September – Driving southward, North Korean forces capture Pohang (6 September), but fail to push Republic of Korea Army (ROKA), Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) and UN forces from the Pusan Perimeter and off the peninsula.

August-November – Lieutenant Colonel John H. McGee directs the organization and training of the EUSA Ranger Company, 8213th Army Unit. After a seven-week training cycle, the EUSA Rangers are attached to the 25th Infantry Division to participate in Operations KILLER and RIPPER.

September – UN Forces under the command of General (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur make an amphibious landing at Inch'on and begin sweeping east across the peninsula, coordinating with UN forces driving north from the Pusan Perimeter.

26 September – GEN MacArthur announces the recapture of Seoul.

October – The Ranger Training Center (RTC) is concurrently created at Fort Benning, Georgia, to begin training Ranger Infantry companies for the Army.

1 October – U.S. forces cross the 38th Parallel.

20-21 October – UN forces capture P'yongyang.

26 October – UN forces reach the Yalu River.

25 November – Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) cross the Yalu River and attack U.S., ROKA units and then UN forces trying to plug gaps on both sides of the peninsula.

December – The 1st, 2nd, and 4th Ranger Companies arrive in Korea.

1951

January – The 3rd, 5th, and 8th Ranger Companies conduct winter training at Camp Carson, Colorado. The training is based on RTC observations and recommendations.

March – The EUSA Ranger Company as part of Task Force DOLVIN is rendered combat ineffective after bitter fighting around Hill 205. It is soon disbanded. ■ The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies participate in the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team jump at Munsan-ni. ■ The final three Ranger companies to see service in Korea (the 3rd, 5th, and 8th) arrive.

April – Chinese Communist Forces launch their Spring Offensive. The UN forces pull back and the Rangers suffer heavy casualties.

August – All six numbered Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne) formed to fight in the Korean War are disbanded. The other Ranger Infantry Companies not deployed to Korea soon follow. The new Ranger Training Command at Fort Benning, GA begins training individuals, rather than Ranger units.

1952

19 May – The 10th Special Forces Group is officially activated with Army personnel slots made available from the disbanded Ranger Companies.

Rebirth of the Rangers

The Ranger Infantry Companies in Korea

by Kenneth Finlayson



The sudden North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950 caught the United States Army unprepared for war and revealed the extent to which the post-World War II drawdown had impaired its ability to conduct special operations. In the previous issue of *Veritas* (6-1), the focus was on the number of *ad hoc* special operations units fielded by the Far East Command (FECOM) and a U.S. infantry division in an effort to stem North Korean advances in the early days of the war. The GHQ Raiders, Eighth Army Rangers, the Ivanhoe Security Force, and the "Shake and Bake" Civil Assistance teams at P'yongyang and Chinnamp'o were units hastily put together to address specific missions that could not otherwise be filled by the Department of the Army in the United States.[1] After the successful defense of the Pusan Perimeter blunted the North Korean offensive, the landing at Inch'on turned the tide of battle against the Communists. From that point, the Army addressed the deficiencies in its special operations forces in a more deliberate manner.

In the late summer of 1950, the Army worked to rebuild one capability deemed necessary for success on the Korean battlefield; the ability to stage raids behind enemy lines.[2] Army Chief of Staff General (GEN) J. Lawton Collins directed that "Marauder" units be formed to counter North Korean guerrilla success on the battlefield. This issue of *Veritas* will address the rebirth of Army-trained Ranger units and the training conducted to handle that large, complex mission.

In August 1945, the Army's six Ranger battalions were disbanded in the postwar draw down. Ranger units were resurrected during the Korean War, this time as airborne companies for attachment to conventional U.S. Army infantry divisions. In their brief fourteen-month tenure, the six Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne) sent to Korea fought in numerous engagements and gained a reputation for fighting prowess just like their WWII predecessors. This issue provides the background on the formation and training of the Ranger Companies that deployed to Korea. One major article examines in detail the experiences of the 2nd and 4th Companies from their organization through the airborne operation at Munsan-ni. Additional articles highlight significant missions by each of the six companies. It concludes with a summary that documents the effectiveness of the Rangers and explains the reasons behind their disbanding. While their existence was brief, their outstanding combat performance contributed significantly to the history of today's 75th Ranger Regiment.

The U.S. Army Ranger Infantry Companies (Airborne) were formed in response to the long-standing successes by North Korean guerrilla units that disrupted operations in the Allied rear areas in the early stages of the war. As the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) drove the U.S. and Republic of Korea Army

(ROKA) forces south, they managed to insert sizeable guerrilla units behind the retreating allies. Between two and three thousand guerrillas infiltrated the Ulchin area when the NKPA pushed south from Wonju in July 1950. A guerrilla element of similar size stepped ashore on the east coast and made its way inland to establish strongholds in the Taebaek Mountains. The ROKA was compelled to move two special anti-guerrilla units, the 1st Separate Battalion and the Yongdongp'o Separate Battalion, from the southwest across the peninsula to counteract enemy success behind the lines.[3] The effectiveness of these guerrilla units was not lost on the U.S. Army.

> *"One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact that the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups. . . for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines. . ."*
>
> *— General J. Lawton Collins*

On 29 August 1950, GEN J. Lawton Collins, issued a memorandum directing the establishment of experimental "Marauder" companies to deal with the guerrilla threat:

"One of the major lessons to be learned from the Korean fighting appears to be the fact that the North Koreans have made very successful use of small groups, trained, armed and equipped for the specific purpose of infiltrating our lines and attacking command posts and artillery positions. . . . The results obtained from such units warrant specific action to develop such units in the American Army."[4]

Collins' memorandum directed that Army Field Forces, the proponent for training, establish a training section at the Infantry Center at Fort Benning, Georgia, prepare a table of organization and equipment (TO&E), and conduct the organization, training and testing, to include combat, of an experimental unit. The training facility was to be established and staffed to train the first volunteers by 1 October 1950. It was at the initial planning conference on 6 September 1950, convened by Major General (MG) Charles L. Bolte, the Army G-3, that the name Rangers was adopted for the new units.[5] The execution of GEN Collins' directive for the all-volunteer Ranger companies proceeded at a break-neck pace.

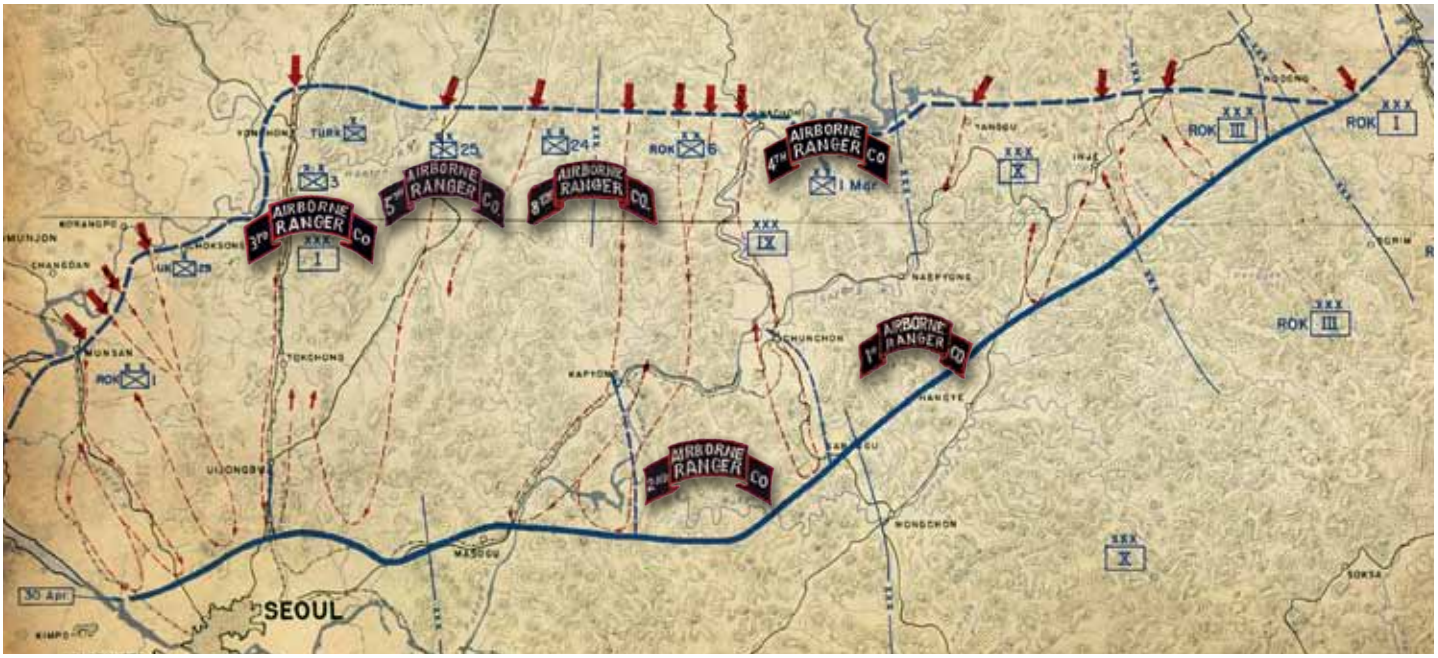


General J. Lawton Collins, the Army Chief of Staff, directed the formation of "Marauder Companies" to counteract the North Korean guerrilla threat. His directive led to the formation of the Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning, Georgia.

GEN Collins selected veteran World War II infantry regimental commander Colonel (COL) John G. Van Houten, to assemble and train the Ranger companies. His deputy was COL Edwin A. Walker, former commander of the WWII First Special Service Force.[6] On 15 September 1950, they formed the Ranger Training Center at the U.S. Army Infantry Center at Fort Benning, GA.[7] A training cadre of twenty-three officers and thirty-four enlisted men was in place by 23 September 1950. A provisional Table of Organization and Equipment, (TO&E) was soon developed. TO&E 7-87 (16 Oct 1950) set the Ranger Company manning at 5 officers and 107 enlisted, with an allowable 10% combat overage bringing the company strength to 122.[8] A standard infantry rifle company of the time had a TO&E strength of 211.[9] The first cycle was set up to accommodate four companies in training. They were numbered 1 thru 4. Unlike their World War II predecessors, the first

Airborne Class: The Korean War Ranger Companies were airborne units. Those volunteers not already jump qualified attended the Army Parachute School at Fort Benning, Georgia.





The six Ranger Companies who saw service in Korea performed a variety of missions across the peninsula. This map depicts the locations of their most significant actions.

Ranger Infantry companies were airborne units. The initial three hundred volunteers began arriving in late September and the training of the first three companies (1st, 2nd and 3rd), began on 2 October 1950.[10] The 4th Company, comprised of black soldiers, was organized on 6 October and began training on 9 October 1950.[11] The first six-week training program was to be completed in November. The 1st Ranger Company deployed to Korea arriving on 9 December 1950.[12]

The first training cycle curriculum consisted of seventeen different topics that included training with foreign weapons, demolitions, field craft and patrolling, map reading, escape and evasion, and intelligence collection.[13] Demanding physical and close quarters combat training were an integral part of the daily training, and were key to weeding out those who could not meet Van Houten's high standards. By mid-October 1950, the first four companies had progressed to the point that they were combat ready.

On 19 October 1950, the Army G-3 requested approval from GEN Collins to deploy three of the Ranger companies to Korea. Collins, in keeping with his original intent, authorized the deployment of one company (1st) to FECOM, but slated two (the 2nd and 4th), for Europe. The 3rd Ranger Company remained at Fort Benning to assist in training four more Ranger companies for deployment to Korea in January 1951.[14] It was the acceptance by GEN MacArthur that Communist China had entered the war in force in early November that caused him to request all available U.S. forces. In response, the Army redirected the 2nd and 4th Companies from Europe to Korea.[15] The two Ranger companies deployed together and arrived on 24 December 1950.[16]



COL John G. Van Houten was General Collins' selection to lead the Ranger Training Center. The commander of the 38th Infantry Regiment in World War II, Van Houten retired as a Major General. In 2006 he was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame.



Colonel Edwin A. Walker was Van Houten's Deputy Commander. A veteran of the First Special Service Force in World War II, he retired as a Major General in 1961.

When the 1st Ranger Company arrived in early December, it was attached to the 2nd Infantry Division, Eighth Army (EUSA). The 2nd Company was sent to the 7th Infantry Division, X Corps, and the 4th Company went to the 1st Cavalry Division, EUSA. The 3rd Company at Fort Benning acted as cadre for the newly formed 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Companies. After completing the original six-week training program, the 3rd joined the 5th and 8th Companies for an additional three weeks of mountain and winter warfare training at Fort Carson, Colorado, before going to Korea.[17] The 6th Ranger Company went to Europe in 1951 and was attached to the 8th Infantry Division. The 7th Company assumed the cadre role at Fort Benning to train more Ranger companies.

The six Ranger companies in Korea engaged in some of the most grueling fighting of the first year of the war. But by mid-1951, when the front lines had stabilized roughly along the original 38th Parallel, missions for which the Rangers were best suited, notably raids behind enemy lines, were no longer feasible. At this point, FECOM disbanded the Ranger companies in theater, assigning the majority of the men to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and the infantry divisions in country.[18]

By October 1951, all of the Army's Ranger Companies had been disbanded. At Fort Benning, the Ranger Training Center, became the Ranger Training Command, and began to train individuals instead of units. Then, the Ranger Department of the Infantry School conducted the Army Ranger Course. The training curriculum originally developed for the Korean War Ranger companies became the foundation of the Army's premier light infantry and leadership course, the Army Ranger School.

Also included in this issue is a biography of General Paik Sun-Yup, former Chief of Staff of the Republic of Korea Army and the most highly decorated Korean combat commander of the war. General Paik was interviewed during his recent visit to Fort Bragg. His participation in all ten of the wartime campaigns explained in this issue provide a unique perspective on the Korean War.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

Endnotes

1 ARSOF in the Korean War, Part I, *Veritas: The Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol 6 No. 1, 2010.

2 Psychological Warfare (Psywar) is the period term for today's Psychological Operations. In the interest of authenticity, the term Psywar will be used throughout.

3 Roy E. Appleman, *The United States Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June-November 1950)* (Washington DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), 105, 107.

4 Department of the Army, Memorandum for the A.C. of S., G-3 (Operations), Subject: Organization of Marauder Companies, 29 August 1950, National Archives, Record Group 95, Box 380, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

5 Department of the Army, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, Memorandum, Subject: Conference Notes on Marauder Company, 7 September 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

6 The Father of the Army Ranger School, COL John G. Van Houten was commissioned in 1926. In World War II, he commanded the 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division and was the Division Chief of Staff. He returned to Fort Benning as the first commander of the Ranger Training Center. He ended his career as the Commanding General, Military District of Washington. He is in the Ranger Hall of Fame. COL Edwin A. Walker was a regimental commander and then commanded the joint Canadian-American First Special Service Force that spearheaded the invasion of Southern France. He left the Ranger Training Command to command the 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, Korea. He ended his military career in 1961 as the Commanding General, 24th Infantry Division, Germany. The First Special Service Force is, in the official Army lineage, the predecessor of today's Special Forces.

7 A request to change the name to the Ranger Training Command was submitted to Department of the Army on 10 October 1950 and ultimately approved on 8 March 1951. AGC, Department of the Army Memorandum to Chief of Army Field Forces, Subject: Outline Plan and Progress Report, Ranger Units, 9th Endorsement dated 8 March 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

8 Chief of Army Field Forces, memorandum dated 23 September 1950, Subject: Marauder (Ranger) Units, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. On 21 September 1950, Department of the Army authorized Third U.S. Army to increase its force structure by 20 officers and 440 enlisted men for the purpose of organizing four Ranger companies under the proposed TO&E manning. Chief of Army Field Forces memorandum dated 10 October 1950, Subject: Outline Plan and Progress Report, Ranger Units, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

9 The Ranger Company had a six-man Company Headquarters section and three 33-man platoons. There was no weapons platoon as in the standard company. A seven-man augmentation for mess, clerical and supply functions was included in the TO&E. This gave the company a strength of 112 when filled.

10 The first volunteers came predominantly from the 82nd Airborne Division. Of the first 300 arrivals, 260 came from the 82nd, 30 from the 11th Airborne Division and 10 from the Airborne Section of the Infantry Center. An additional 180 volunteers arrived on 6 October 1950. Chief of Army Field Forces memorandum dated 10 October 1950, Subject: Outline Plan and Progress Report, Ranger Units, page 2, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

11 On 26 October 1950, for no discernable reason, the 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies switched company numbers and guidons.

12 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM, 19 October 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

13 Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, Memorandum to the Chief of Staff, Subject: Organization of Ranger Companies, 16 October 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

14 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM, 19 October 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

15 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, memorandum for the Chief of Staff, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM, 6 November 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, Memorandum for Record, Subject: Deployment of Ranger units to FECOM, 10 November 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

16 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, message to the Adjutant General, subject: Ranger Companies, 26 Mar 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

17 The addition of winter training was the result of a recommendation by MAJ John K. Singlaub who was sent to Korea by COL Van Houten to observe the Rangers in combat.

18 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Operations, message to CINCFE, Subject: Inactivation of Ranger Units in FECOM, 1 June 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

"Cold Steel Third"

The 3rd Ranger Infantry Company

by Kenneth Finlayson

In Korea, at 0700 hours on 11 April 1951, the 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID) formed a task force composed of C Company, 64th Heavy Tank Battalion, F Company, 65th Infantry Regiment, and the 3rd Ranger Company. The task force crossed the line of departure and moved north to clear the village of Kantongyon and the small valley beyond. Captain (CPT) Jessie C. Tidwell, the Ranger Company Commander, loaded his men on the Charlie Company tanks (commanded by CPT Daniel Boone from Kentucky) and headed towards the village.[1]

As the tanks approached the village, they began receiving small arms fire. CPT Tidwell dismounted his 1st and 2nd Platoons, keeping 3rd Platoon in reserve with him. CPT Robert I. Channon, the Ranger Executive Officer (XO), took charge of the two dismounted platoons and rapidly cleared the village. Reaching the far side, the Rangers moved up a low hill behind the town. After the troops crested the hill, they began moving down the far side.



The 3rd Ranger Company was supported by tanks of the 64th Heavy Tank Battalion in the attack on Kantongyon. The 3rd Rangers frequently worked with armor during offensive operations of the 3rd Infantry Division.

At the base of the hill, the Rangers found a network of terraced rice paddies extending for seven hundred meters to a ridge that intersected the valley from the east. Well-prepared and camouflaged positions from the base of the ridge to the crest provided excellent observation and fields of fire for the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF). Unknown to Channon, the 3rd Platoon and the armor company had already moved around the west side of the hill, splitting the task force. Only two tanks were left to support the dismounted Ranger platoons. As soon as the Rangers began advancing across the rice paddy, the two tanks, without warning, pulled back and rejoined the rest of the armor company.

Now, under increasingly heavy Chinese small arms and mortar fire, the two Ranger platoons were quickly pinned down in the terraced rice paddies. Reaching CPT Tidwell on the radio, Channon requested fire support. What arrived instead was a heavy bombardment of Chinese mortar fire. Under the barrage, both platoons were forced to advance across the open paddies towards the base of the ridge. As they moved, two tanks sent by CPT Tidwell positioned themselves behind the Rangers and began systematically destroying the bunkers on the ridge with cannon fire. Reinforced by the armor, the 3rd Rangers

The 3rd Ranger Company advancing with tank support in the Kantongyon Valley. The 1st and 2nd Platoons became separated from their supporting armor and had to conduct a bayonet charge to clear Chinese defensive positions.





The Ranger Training Center was formed at Fort Benning, Georgia in October 1950. After completing their initial phase of training, the 3rd, 5th, and 8th Ranger Companies went through mountain and cold weather training at Camp Carson, Colorado. Camp Stoneman, California was the Port of Embarkation for the Ranger companies deploying to Korea.

charged up the slope into the hostile fire to clear the ridge with a ferocious bayonet charge and hand grenades. Moving from one position to another, the Rangers killed or forced the defenders to flee. As the Rangers crested the ridge, the rest of the task force, coming from the flank, drove the Chinese up the valley. The fight for "Bloody-Nose Ridge" cost the 3rd Ranger Company four killed and eleven wounded.[2] The bayonet attack across a half mile of open terrain culminating with a violent hand-to-hand assault typified the Rangers' combat training and aggressive spirit. This demonstrated that the 3rd Rangers were probably the best trained of any of the Ranger companies deployed to Korea.



Black and Gold Ranger Tab

Mountain and Winter Warfare training will be conducted at Camp Carson, Colo, for the Third, Fifth, and Eighth Ranger Companies, totaling 390 pers. Ranger troops will depart Ft Benning GA, on or about 20 Jan 51. Movement Directive will be published by DA. This special training to begin at Camp Carson as soon after arrival as practicable and continue for approximately 3 weeks.

— Chief, Army Field Forces 30 Dec 1950.[3]

The first iteration of training for the four newly-formed airborne Ranger Infantry Companies at Fort Benning, Georgia's Ranger Training Center (RTC) ended with the deployment of the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Ranger Infantry Companies to Korea in early December 1950. The 3rd Ranger Company remained at the RTC as the cadre to train the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Companies. Having husbanded the second cycle of Ranger company training, the 3rd Rangers were most prepared for combat operations in Korea. Unlike the first three Ranger companies, those in the second cycle went through three additional weeks of rigorous mountain and cold weather training before going overseas.

The Commandant of the Ranger Training Center, Colonel (COL) John G. Van Houten, a decorated World War II infantry regimental commander, and his staff developed a challenging six-week training program that progressed from individual fitness and soldier skills to collective training at the company-level.[4] Strenuous physical training, hand-to-hand combat, and individual marksmanship with all infantry weapons were the initial focus. Road and cross-country marches up to forty miles in length reflected COL Van Houten's belief that a Ranger's ability to move rapidly on foot was critical to his success on the battlefield.[5]

As the first cycle of individual Ranger skills culminated, training shifted to advanced skills which included land navigation, patrolling, and crew-served weapons, the 60 mm mortar and 57 mm recoilless rifle. Also part of the sixty-hour weeks was demolitions training, the handling of prisoners of war, and intelligence collection.[6] The final weeks culminated in platoon and company-level small-unit training and field exercises.

Week Five encompassed platoon day and night patrolling, a combat reaction course, and day and night live fire attacks against a fortified position. In the final week, the Rangers trained on company-level operations, raids, practiced infiltrating enemy lines, and conducted night airborne operations.[7] On 30 November 1950, three of the four Ranger companies returned to their barracks in the Harmony Church area of Fort Benning. An equipment issue had caused the 2nd Ranger Company to finish training a week later. Then, on 9 December 1950, the 1st Ranger Company deployed to Korea. It was followed shortly by 2nd and 4th.[8] The 3rd Company remained at the RTC to cadre the next cycle Ranger training cycle.

Training for the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th Ranger Companies began on 20 November 1950. The Program of Instruction (POI) remained essentially unchanged from the first cycle. However, 3rd Ranger Company Sergeant (SGT) Raymond L. Pierce recalled, "there was a distinct difference between the first and second training cycles. The first cycle was characterized by light packs and moderately long, five mile runs. The second cycle movements involved heavy packs and very long marches."[9]

The training was both demanding and dangerous. During a night low-level airborne insertion on 8 January 1950, twenty-two Rangers were injured and one, Ronald L. Sullivan, of the 8th Company, was killed.[10] On 13 January 1951, while the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th companies graduated and were awarded their black and gold Ranger Tabs at Fort Benning, the 3rd prepared for advanced winter training.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, several Ranger Training Center staff went to Korea to observe the first three Ranger companies in combat.[11] One of the observers was Major (MAJ) John K. Singlaub, a World War II veteran of the Office of Strategic Services, who arrived in late November.[12] Based on



Rugged, realistic training was the focus of the Ranger Training Center. Here, troops of the 1st Ranger Company conduct an assault on a village. The 3rd Company went through the first cycle of training with the 1st, 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies.



3rd Ranger Company training at Camp Carson, Colorado in February 1951 focused on learning to survive in cold weather and to move rapidly over mountainous terrain.

the observers' collective recommendation, a three-week mountain and cold weather phase was added to the Ranger POI.[13] Hence, early on 20 January 1951, the 3rd, 5th, and 8th Ranger Companies boarded a train in Columbus, Georgia, bound for Camp Carson, near Colorado Springs, Colorado.[14]

Mountain Training Detachment will prep detailed training program and forward thru Fifth Army to this office for approval. Physical conditioning, survival under all conditions, and resupply by air drop, animal pack and man pack will particularly be stressed. The ability to live in cold weather will be of prime importance. Individual and unit mobility will be covered from the stand point of ability to negotiate mountainous terrain on foot. ***Snow is not required for this phase of training.*** *All training to be conducted at Camp Carson, Colo or vicinity, unless otherwise specifically directed. Any ski instruction that may be conducted will be of the military cross country variety. [Emphasis added].*

— Chief, Army Field Forces 30 Dec 1950[15]

The three Ranger companies arrived at Camp Carson late on 22 January 1951, glad to be off the filthy, dilapidated troop train that had carried them half-way across the country.[16] Up early for a morning run, the Rangers got their first taste of operating in the thin air of the Rocky Mountains. First Lieutenant (1LT) Robert I. Channon, the 3rd Company XO, recalled: "The first week showed us clearly what was meant about becoming acclimatized to higher elevations. One or two training runs at that altitude told us we were in a brand new ballgame. We wondered for a while whether we would ever get our breath back."[17]

The three-phased mountain training program began with the issue of cold-weather clothing and mountaineering equipment. Fur parkas, ankle-high leather mountain boots, cold weather tents and stoves were among the specialized items supplied to the Rangers. A series of classroom lectures interspersed between strenuous field training that concentrated on movement techniques over rock and ice got them familiar with the proper employment, use and maintenance of the new equipment.[18] "We were told we were in Carson to learn two things," said SGT James M. Stamper, 3rd Company. "One was cold weather and mountain training, and the other was mule packing and lashing."[19]

CPT George A. Parnell, from the Ranger Training Center, had come along to observe and evaluate the training. During the first phase Parnell noted: "The training was informative, well-prepared, and enthusiastically received by Ranger personnel." However, as with any new program, not everything went smoothly. "A major error was committed which was recognized, in that Ranger personnel were issued new ski boots and committed to a cross country march prior to refitting and breaking [them] in. Exchanges were subsequently made: however, many men endured blistered feet during the remaining two weeks of the program."[20]

Despite sore feet, Ranger field training in the second phase featured individual survival techniques, winter bivouacking, mountain climbing, movement and evacuation.[21] "The second week was spent at mid-elevations working from a base camp in a mountain ravine that would be resupplied by mule train," noted 1LT Channon.[22] The second week was most noteworthy for the severity of the weather, a factor not considered important in the Army Field Forces directive.

Temperatures during the Phase II field bivouac ranged from minus 15 degrees in the daytime to a low

Fort Carson, Colorado



Soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division practice turning on skis at Camp Carson. In World War II, Camp Carson was the home of the Army's Mountain Warfare Training Center.

Named for General Christopher "Kit" Carson, the famous Army Scout of the 1800's, Fort Carson, Colorado was for many years the home of the Army's Mountain Warfare Training Center. Established in 1942, Camp Carson was built on land donated by the city of Colorado Springs. During World War II, more than 100,000 soldiers trained at Camp Carson. Four infantry divisions, the 71st, 89th, 104th, and 10th Mountain Division were activated or trained at the post along with more than 125 smaller units.

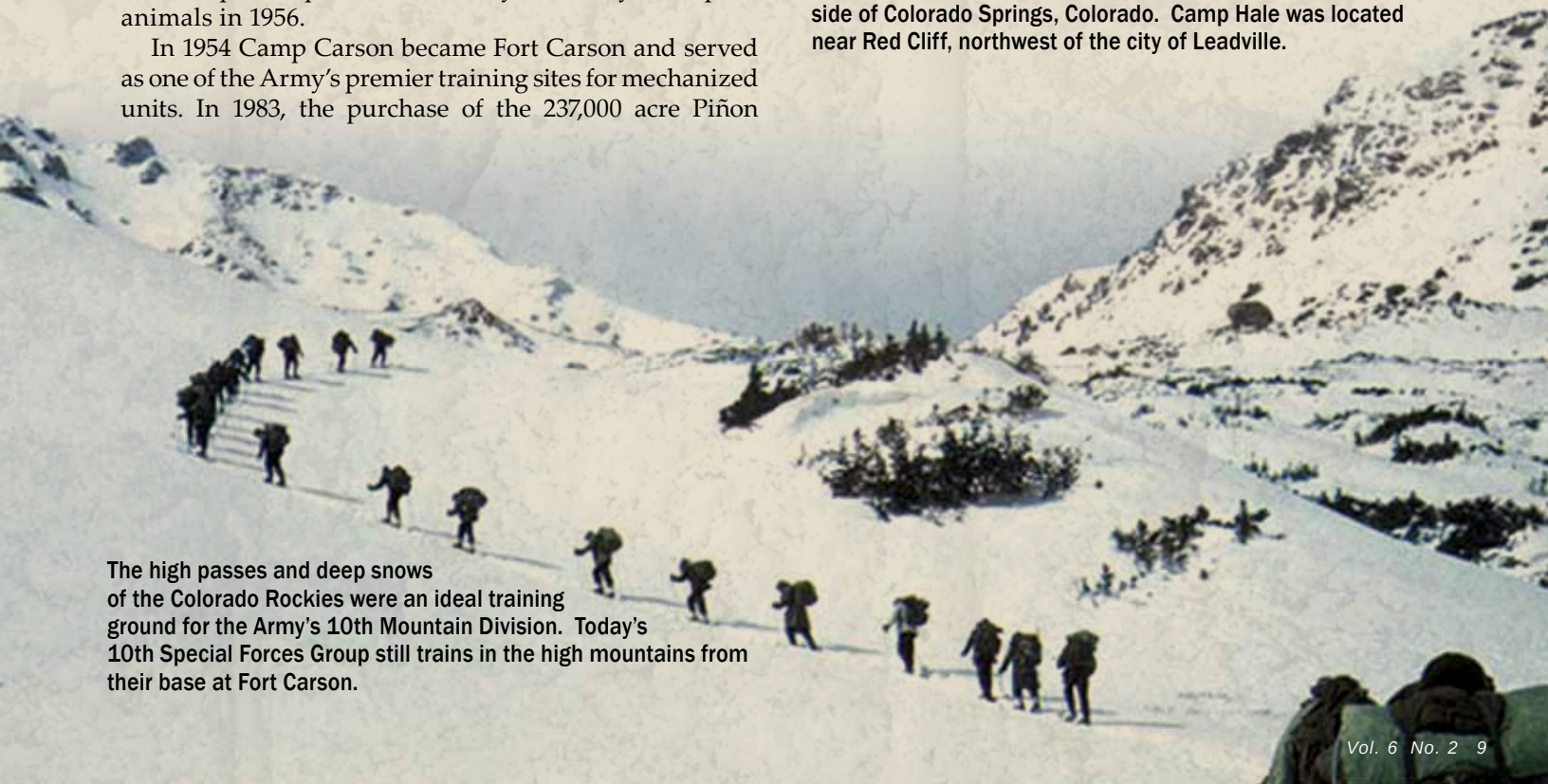
During the war, Camp Carson served as an internment camp for more than 9,000 Italian and German prisoners of war. It was the Army's primary training center for units using pack animals, particularly the artillery, a role the post kept until the Army did away with pack animals in 1956.

In 1954 Camp Carson became Fort Carson and served as one of the Army's premier training sites for mechanized units. In 1983, the purchase of the 237,000 acre Piñon Canyon Maneuver Site more than doubled the size of the post. Today, Fort Carson is the home of the 4th Infantry Division, the 43rd Sustainment Brigade, and the 10th Special Forces Group.

Camp Hale was established in 1942 for use as a winter warfare and mountain training site. The cantonment area was located in Red Cliff, near Leadville, Colorado. It was used extensively by the 10th Mountain Division for training. Camp Hale was the primary training site for the Army's Mountain and Cold Weather Training Program until July 1965 when the camp was deactivated and control turned over to the U.S. Forest Service.



Camp Carson (now Fort Carson) is located on the southwest side of Colorado Springs, Colorado. Camp Hale was located near Red Cliff, northwest of the city of Leadville.



The high passes and deep snows of the Colorado Rockies were an ideal training ground for the Army's 10th Mountain Division. Today's 10th Special Forces Group still trains in the high mountains from their base at Fort Carson.



The training at Camp Carson involved long marches over mountain terrain. The Rangers traversed passes over 10,000 ft. in the Rocky Mountains during their three weeks at Carson.



The Army's Arctic Tent proved inadequate for the severe cold and high altitude the Rangers encountered at Camp Carson. The Rangers resorted to using ponchos and tree boughs for shelter during the frigid winter nights.

of nearly 30 below at night. Repeated snowfalls dumped six to eight inches of snow on the Rangers. In the cold, high altitude conditions, they discovered that some of their modern equipment did not function as well as some more traditional techniques. "Personnel initially occupied the two-man mountain tent, which were promptly discarded in favor of the bough shelters due to the accumulation of frost and the 'imaginary' concentration of cold within the tent," observed CPT Parnell.[23] "We tried our two-man tents the first night," said 1LT Robert Channon. "When we woke up in the morning, the inside of the tent was coated completely with thousands of little icicles from our frozen breath."[24]

The amount of snow reduced the rock climbing, rope-work, and rappelling to simply demonstrations by the Mountain Training Detachment cadre. However, the heavy snow did force the Rangers to concentrate on their primary training objective, moving rapidly in the mountains during winter.

"Day conditioning marches and compass problems were executed and much knowledge acquired in mountain movement as well as physical hardening," reported CPT Parnell. "Rangers learned to follow contour and ridge lines, estimate range and time distance in mountainous terrain."[25] The continuous heavy snow and below freezing temperatures in Phase II finally forced the Camp Commander to order all the troops in from the field for the weekend. The Rangers rested in the barracks before heading back out to the field on Monday for Week Three or Phase III.

Week Three was mostly tactical, cross-country day and night marches under simulated combat conditions. Aerial resupply drops were used in good weather; otherwise supplies were packed in by mules. The 35th Quartermaster Company (Pack), one of the last remaining pack mule units in the Army, supported the Rangers. Lean, weather-beaten ex-cowboys in the 35th taught the Rangers the finer points of "mule skinning" before assigning the often recalcitrant mules for one-on-one training.[26]

The final Ranger company exercise was a cross-country march from Camp Hale, twenty miles outside of Leadville, CO (altitude 10,430') back to Camp Carson. During the seventy-five mile, multi-day march, the Rangers crossed mountain passes over 10,000 feet high, battling the winter snows all the way back to a base camp outside Camp Carson. "The total load on our backs including weapons reached about seventy pounds," recalled 1LT Bob Channon. "At times we were climbing directly up over the high passes where each step was a high mountain climbing step. The sheer exhaustion of the repetitive steps was more than many of us could stand."[27] Then the Rangers had to infiltrate into the post without getting caught by the MPs.[28]

The rugged training took a toll on the three companies. CPT Parnell noted: "Ranger casualties and evacuations averaged 5 to 10 men per day. A total of approximately 40 percent of all Ranger personnel were evacuated by the end of the second week. Roughly 97 percent of these casualties were due to flu."[29] Still, when the Rangers boarded a train on 27 February 1951 to take them to Camp Stoneman, California, their Port of Embarkation for Korea, the consensus was that the winter training at Camp Carson was worthwhile.

In his final report to COL Van Houten, CPT George Parnell concluded that "the overall training received was excellent and of infinite value. Training was considerably enhanced by the unusual and extreme cold. An excellent program was offered and subsequent instruction should be even better due to the experience being gained by the Mountain Training Detachment and the efforts being made in developing and improving training."[30]

On 5 March 1951, the 3rd boarded the troop transport USS *General William F. Hase* (AP-146) along with the 5th and 8th Ranger Companies, in San Francisco. After short stops in Yokohama and Kobe, Japan, the *Hase* docked at Pusan, Korea on 24 March 1951.[31] Following a short in-processing period, the three Ranger companies loaded aboard Landing Ship-Tank (LST) *Q018* on 28 March for a

three-day journey to Inch'on. Arriving on 31 March 1951, the companies were assigned to their respective divisions; the 3rd Ranger Company to the 3rd Infantry Division (3rd ID); 5th Company to the 25th Infantry Division (25th ID); and 8th to the 24th Infantry Division (24th ID).

The 3rd ID, commanded by MG Robert H. Soule, was northeast of Seoul in the vicinity of Uijongbu. The division was attacking north towards the Imjin River as part of Operation RIPPER.[32] Unlike what the other Ranger Companies experienced, MG Soule had given considerable thought to incorporating the 3rd Ranger Company into his division's operations.[33]

In a memorandum to General (GEN) Matthew B. Ridgway, Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) commander, MG Soule outlined his plan. Initially, the 3rd Ranger Company would go through a two-week indoctrination period. During this time, the Rangers would reconnoiter areas in the division rear to flush out by-passed enemy troops, locate weapons caches, study the enemy's use of camouflage, and learn their methods of operation.[34] The "Officers and NCO's will spend a few days with the Division Reconnaissance Company . . . accompanying them on patrols to gain knowledge of the terrain."[35] Also, the division had scheduled "a parachute jump for the entire company for morale and pay purposes."[36] The subsequent missions given the 3rd Ranger Company reflected MG Soule's clear understanding of their role and his appreciation for the mountain training they had received.

Prior to a division attack, the Rangers would conduct "close-in patrols and raids across the Imjin River to determine which of the many dug-in positions are occupied by the enemy and to secure prisoners."[37] Additionally, they were to "establish ambushes on [forward] roads and trails, and establish observation and listening posts in front of and in the rear of enemy lines to observe his movements and determine his habits."[38] When the division attacked, the Rangers' role shifted.

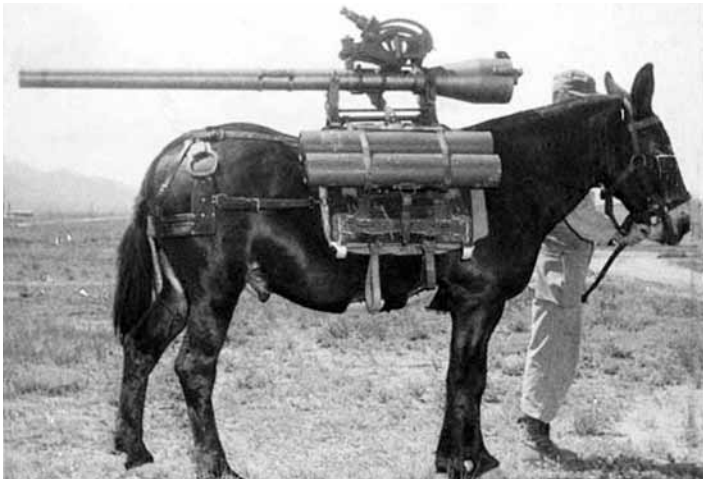
In the offensive, MG Soule directed that the Rangers "accompany armor on its deep thrusts into enemy lines, remain with it and patrol until the infantry makes contact. They were to seize and occupy selected high peaks used by the enemy as observation posts and run combat patrols on the flanks through rugged mountains to maintain contact with friendly units on the [division's] flanks."[39]

MG Soule also envisioned using the Rangers against high value targets deep in the enemy rear: "When there is reason to believe important Communist personalities are in an area and will withdraw in front of the attack, [the Rangers will] parachute into the areas one or two days march by armor in front of the line, block the most probable escape routes and capture or destroy the important Communist personnel . . . if such an operation could promise the capture or destruction of ten or fifteen leading Korean Communists, it would be worth the risk."[40]

The UN Command's objective had changed from the destruction of the North Korean People's Army



The Rangers trained on the techniques of packing and moving supplies on mules. The 35th Quartermaster Company (Pack), the Army's premier "muleskinners," taught the Rangers how to work with the often contrary mules.



An Army mule loaded with a 57 mm Recoilless Rifle. After training with using mules at Camp Carson, the Rangers did not use animals in Korea.



Men of the 3rd Ranger Company prepare for a night patrol north of the Imjin River in April 1951. Patrolling forward of the division's front lines was a primary mission of the Rangers.



A WWII Ranger veteran loads ammunition aboard a tank prior to offensive operations. Thanks to the division commander, MG Robert H. Soule, the Rangers had a strong supporter in the 3rd Infantry Division who gave them the types of missions for which they were best suited.

(NKPA) with the intervention of massive Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in November 1950. The CCF Spring Offensive, beginning on 22 April, completely changed the complexion of the battlefield and virtually eliminated the opportunities for employing the Rangers as planned by MG Soule. Still, the Rangers accomplished what MG Soule envisioned when they took part in the attack during Operation RUGGED that became known as "Bloody-Nose Ridge" on 11 April 1951.[41]

As with all the Ranger Companies that fought in Korea, their training, aggressiveness, and bravery made them formidable foes. The 3rd Ranger Company was fortunate in their assignment to a division commander who capitalized on their capabilities and tried to employ them properly. Ultimately, it was the static nature of the battlefield, not the skill and determination of the Rangers, that led to their disbanding in June 1951.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

Endnotes

1 Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ivy books, 1989) 105. C Company, 64th Heavy Tank Battalion was a mixed unit with all black enlisted men and only white officers.

2 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 110.

3 Chief, Army Field Forces, Fort Monroe, VA, Message to CG Fifth Army dated 30 Dec 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. For the sake of clarity, certain abbreviations in this message have been spelled out.

4 Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Summary of Training Activities dated 30 October 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

5 Colonel John G. Van Houten, Letter to Major General Charles L. Bolte, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 28 December 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

6 Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Summary of Training Activities.

7 Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Summary of Training Activities.

8 Department of the Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 Memorandum, Subject: Deployment of Ranger Units to FECOM, dated 6 November 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

9 Raymond L. Pierce in Robert I. Channon's *Cold Steel Third*, manuscript copy, pages 2-5, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Hereafter referred to as Channon manuscript.

10 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 53.

11 HQ Far East Command, memorandum to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Subject: Observers from Ranger Training Center to Observe Employment and Activities of Ranger Type Units in FECOM, dated 13 November 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files.

12 Major Singlaub ran the Advanced Airborne Training Section. While in Korea, he was involved in air drop operations in support of the Marines pulling out of the CCF trap at the Chosin Reservoir. Flying over the lines, the vivid image of Marines huddled around small fires left a strong impression. John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York, Summit books, 1991), 174.

13 Headquarters, Far East Command, Memorandum dated 13 December 1950, Subject: Mountain and Extreme Cold Weather Training (Ranger Units), USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

14 The 6th Ranger Company was the only Ranger company to deploy to Europe, where it was attached to the 1st Infantry Division. The 7th Ranger Company remained at Fort Benning, GA to fulfill the role of cadre vacated by the 3rd Ranger Company and provide replacements for the Ranger companies in Korea.

15 Chief, Army Field Forces, Fort Monroe, VA, Message to CG Fifth Army.

16 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 57-58.

17 Channon Manuscript, 3-5.

18 Headquarters Ranger Training Center, Memorandum for Commander Ranger Training Center, Subject: Ranger Training at Camp Carson Colorado, 16 February 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Parnell Memorandum.

19 Channon manuscript, 3-13.

20 Parnell Memorandum.

21 Parnell Memorandum.

22 Channon manuscript, 3-5.

23 Parnell Memorandum.

24 Channon Manuscript, 3-6.

25 Parnell Memorandum.

26 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 60-61.

27 Channon Manuscript, 3-8.

28 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 62.

29 Parnell Memorandum; 1LT Robert I. Channon noted that only twenty-two members of the company made it through the entire third week without illness or injury. Eventually all the Rangers needing medical attention rejoined the company before it deployed; Channon Manuscript, 3-8.

30 Parnell Memorandum. A second iteration of training at Camp Carson was conducted for the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th Ranger Companies assisned to the Army National Guard. Today's Rangers go through mountain training at Camp Frank D. Merrill, near Dahlonega, Georgia.

31 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 99-102.

32 Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950 – July 1951* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 343. Operation RIPPER concluded at the end of March, 1951. Just as the Rangers were attached to the 3rd ID in early April, the Chinese launched their Spring Offensive.

33 The 3rd Infantry Division was composed of the U.S. 7th, 15th, and 65th Infantry Regiments, the British 29th Brigade, a Belgian battalion and the 10th Battalion Combat Team, Philippine Expeditionary Force. The 3rd ID was part of the U.S. I Corps.

34 Headquarters, 3d Infantry Division, Memorandum for: Commander, Eighth U.S. Army, Subject: Comments on Proposed Employment of 3d Ranger Company, 3 April 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as 3rd ID Memorandum.

35 3rd ID Memorandum.

36 3rd ID Memorandum.

37 3rd ID Memorandum.

38 3rd ID Memorandum.

39 3rd ID Memorandum.

40 3rd ID Memorandum.

41 Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 353.

The 8th Ranger Company

"Black Devils" on Hill 628

by Eugene G. Piasecki



Activated on 20 November 1950, the 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) with the 3rd, 5th, and 6th Companies began the second training cycle conducted by the Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning, Georgia. On 13 January 1951, the 3rd, 5th and 8th companies were sent to Camp Carson, Colorado for an additional three weeks of cold-weather and mountain training before leaving for Korea. After a few days at Camp Stoneman, California, the three Ranger companies departed for Korea on 5 March 1951. Landing at Inch'on 31 March 1951, the Ranger companies were independently attached to different American infantry divisions. The 8th Ranger Company went to the 24th Infantry Division (24th ID) located in central South Korea. Commanded by Captain (CPT) James A. Herbert, the 8th did not have long to wait for action.

On 3 April 1951, General Matthew B. Ridgway, the new Eighth Army (EUSA) commander, launched Operation RUGGED to push Communist forces north of the Imjin River.[1] The 8th Ranger Company led the 24th ID attack. They would suffer the fate common to all Ranger units in Korea. Tasked to hold key terrain, they suffered major losses because their fox-hole strength was one-half that of a 1951-era infantry company. Also, since they were well-disciplined, they were often used to resolve potentially desperate situations and plug gaps.

Initially, Operation RUGGED made great progress. In classic fashion, the 8th Ranger Company patrolling forward of 24th ID units, found and eliminated enemy positions and facilitated the rapid crossing of the Yongp'yong River. By 22 April 1951, the 24th ID had reached the Hant'an River before nightfall. As they prepared to continue the offensive in the morning, approximately 350,000 Communist troops (twenty-one Chinese and nine North Korean divisions) counter-attacked.[2] The speed and magnitude of the Communist Spring Offensive forced the outnumbered U.S. I and IX Corps to conduct a series of withdrawals through successive delaying positions before finally establishing a defensive line a few miles north of Seoul. During the withdrawals, UN forces inflicted significant casualties with artillery and air strikes.



CPT James A. Herbert commanded the 8th Ranger Infantry Company from its formation on 20 November 1950 until he was wounded on 25 April 1951 on Hill 628. BG Herbert was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame in 2004.

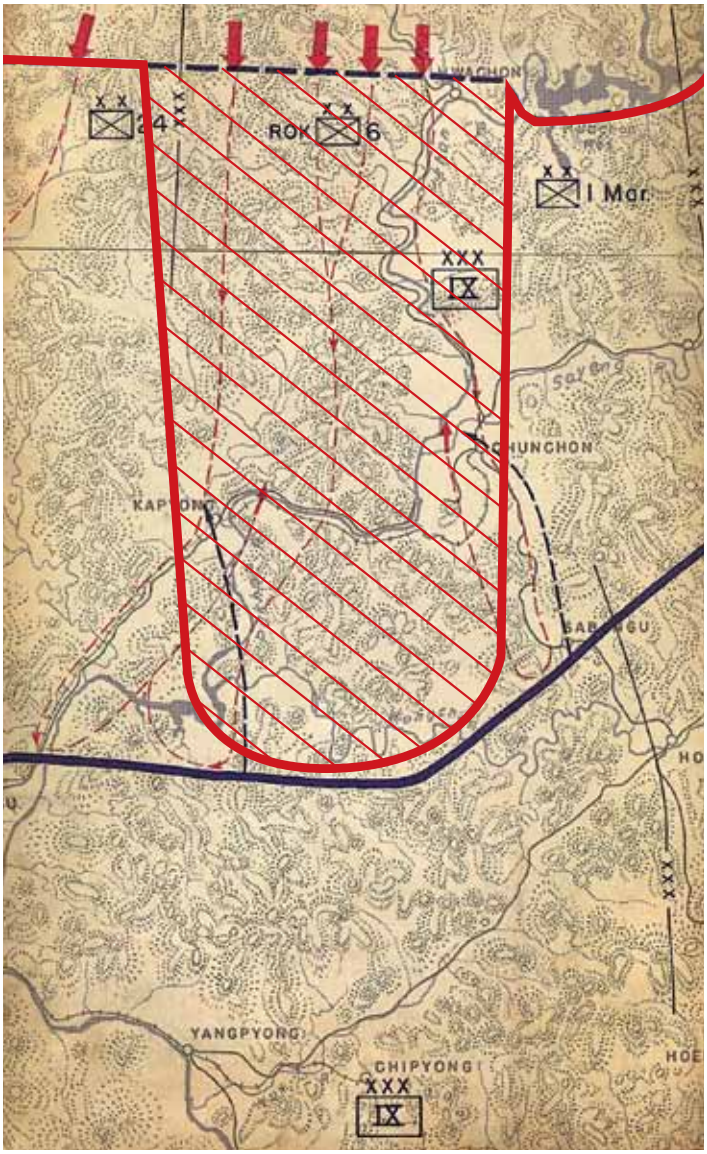


MG Blackshear M. Bryan assumed command of the 24th Infantry Division in March 1951. This was his first combat command and first combat experience despite an active duty career that began in 1923.

While the Americans held their ground in the initial stages of the Communist attack, the 6th Republic of Korea (ROK) Division, positioned between the 24th ID and the 1st Marine Division, received the main attack.[3] At 0250 hours on 23 April 1951, hit hard by the Chinese *60th Division* in the Namdae River valley south of Kumhwa, the ROK infantry regiments disintegrated, abandoning weapons, vehicles, and equipment as they turned into a fleeing mob. Their sudden retreat created an almost twenty-one mile wide "U" shaped penetration in the UN lines. This put the 24th ID and the entire Eighth Army in jeopardy of being shattered by Communist forces.[4] Having lost communication with the ROK 6th Division, MG Blackshear M. Bryan, ordered the Rangers to screen the division's exposed right flank with patrols to provide early warning of any approaching Chinese.[5] In the meantime, MG Bryan also moved 24th



The men carried their combat packs, two days rations, bedrolls, mountain bags, and four to six grenades. The riflemen had three or four bandoliers of ammunition.
(Illustration by Mariano Santillan)



The Communist Spring Offensive main attack concentrated on the ROK 6th Division's front on 23 April 1950 and created an almost twenty-one mile U-shaped penetration of UN lines between the 24th Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Division.

ID forces to protect this flank. The 1st Marine Division scrambled to guard its unprotected left flank. The 27th British Commonwealth Brigade and the U.S. 5th Cavalry Regiment were rushed in to blunt the Chinese onslaught.[6]

As the situation worsened, on 23 April 1951, the Rangers assembled at the 24th ID's command post at 1600 hours. They were ordered to occupy Hill 1168 and make contact with the ROK unit on the Ranger's right flank by midnight.[7] It was a mission impossible since the Rangers would have to cross Hills 628 and 1010 to reach Hill 1168, and they were carrying heavier-than-normal packs. First Sergeant Charles R. Craig, Jr. said "The Rangers were prepared for a fight and had put two days rations and mountain sleeping bags in each combat pack. Each rifleman carried four bandoliers of ammunition with forty-eight rounds per bandolier, and four to six fragmentation grenades, although some carried as many as twelve."[8] After traveling by truck, to the base of Hill 628, the 8th Rangers began climbing its forward slope. Leading the eighty-nine "Black Devils" was CPT Herbert with a small headquarters element. The First, Third, and Second Platoons followed behind in order. First Lieutenant (1LT) Alfred J. Giacherine, the company executive officer was at the rear of the column.[9]

When they reached the top of Hill 628 about 0330 hours on 24 April, the Rangers halted, established a perimeter defense, and dug in. At daybreak, CPT Herbert dispatched small patrols to locate the nearest friendly forces. After meeting a ten-man patrol from L Company, 21st Infantry Regiment and getting a general idea where the American units were, the Rangers left Hill 628. By 1800 hours they were atop Hill 1010. From there, CPT Herbert sent a patrol led by Master Sergeant (MSG) Phillip D. Moore, the First Platoon Sergeant, to recon Hill 1168 which was still three-thousand meters away. They soon returned to report that the Chinese were about a kilometer away. Corporal (CPL) Robert W. Black commented: "From my position on the hill (Hill



CPL Robert W. Black volunteered for the Rangers while serving in the 82nd Airborne Division. Assigned to the 8th Ranger Company on 20 November 1950 as a Browning Automatic Rifleman in Third Platoon, he was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame in 1995.



1LT Berkeley J. Strong was a WW II veteran who became the third platoon leader. Wounded along with CPT Herbert, he remained in the Army and served in Vietnam as an advisor to the Vietnamese Army. He became a member of the Ranger Hall of Fame in 1996.



MSG Gayal H. Ellis was the platoon sergeant of the second platoon who assisted 1LT Giacherine in maintaining control and helped move the Rangers from Hill 628 to the evacuation point.



CPL Eugene C. Rivera was the company communications chief who maintained radio contact with the 24th ID to call for artillery fire and the 6th Tank Battalion to evacuate the Rangers. CPL Rivera's actions earned him a place in the Ranger Hall of Fame in 1998.

1010), I saw the Chinese moving boldly. They were below us in what appeared to be rivers of brown flowing south--Chinese in massive numbers moving forward to reinforce their attacking troops. What we saw did not bode well for us. We were deep in enemy-controlled territory and greatly outnumbered."[10] What the Rangers did not know was that they were watching elements of the Chinese *40th, 20th, 26th, and 27th Field Armies* rushing to exploit the gap between the 24th ID and 1st Marine Divisions.[11]

At midnight, 24 April, CPT Herbert sent a four-man patrol back towards Hill 628 to find the 21st Infantry elements. Three and one-half hours later, CPL Michael Rosen returned to report that the 21st Infantry Regiment was no longer there, but the Chinese had occupied Hill 628.[12] At dawn, a group of fifteen South Korean soldiers, bypassed by the Chinese, stumbled into the Ranger's perimeter saying "many, many Chinese."[13] In the face of mounting Chinese pressure, the 24th ID G-3 (operations officer) ordered the Rangers to pull back to Hill 628 and link up with the 5th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (RCT). MG Bryan was going to conduct a deliberate daylight withdrawal starting with the forward elements of his division.[14]

The 8th Rangers would have to fight their way out. CPT Herbert had First Platoon lead with the Third and the Second Platoons following in order as they headed southwest along the ridgeline to Hill 628. They had to prevent 3rd Battalion, 5th RCT from being cut off by the enemy. As they closed on Hill 628, CPT Herbert radioed 1LT Giacherine that there were "some Chinks in front (approximately fifteen) and that he was going to get himself some."[15] The Rangers had come upon a large Chinese force preparing to hit the 24th ID flank guarded by the 21st Infantry. Realizing that the Rangers were all that stood in the way of preventing the destruction of that regiment, CPT Herbert and 1LT Berkeley J. Strong, Third Platoon leader, preemptively attacked the Chinese with the two lead platoons. Meanwhile, 1LT Giacherine and MSG Gayal H. Ellis, Second platoon sergeant, deployed his unit to protect the company's rear when CPT Herbert radioed that the company was going to have to fight its way through the Chinese.

When the 8th Rangers charged forward, Chinese small arms and automatic weapons fire erupted from the right. Skirting around the northwest slope of the hill, 1LT Giacherine did not see any supporting base of fire; every man fired as he pleased.[16] LT Giacherine rushed forward to find his company commander. Unable to locate CPT Herbert, he looked for CPL Eugene C. Rivera, his radio operator. 1LT Giacherine "raised" the 2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment to request American artillery to counter the Chinese fire. As the situation became desperate and more and more Chinese small arms and mortar fire bracketed their positions, Ranger casualties mounted. As the only officer still able to fight, 1LT Giacherine assumed command and told MSG Ellis to get a few Rangers positioned on the forward ridge and to form a perimeter with the others.

With his rear protected, 1LT Giacherine used MSGs Cox and Ellis and Sergeant First Class (SFC) McNeely

to coordinate the defense while he requested help from the 21st Infantry Regiment. Unable to break through to the Rangers because of increased Chinese pressure, the 5th RCT operations officer relayed their predicament through the 2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry and asked them to: "Send message to Ranger Company. Get out best way possible."[17] Quickly assessing his options, 1LT Giacherine decided to withdraw along a trail to the northwest and asked the 2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry for tanks to evacuate the Rangers. At the link-up point, just short of a road, 1LT Giacherine positioned the wounded inside a hasty defensive perimeter and settled down to wait for "the cavalry." Fifteen minutes later, five M46 Patton tanks from C Company, 6th Medium Tank Battalion, 24th ID rumbled up. Wounded Rangers were loaded on the tank decks, and the combined force headed to the 21st Infantry Command Post where ambulances awaited.[18]

The fight at Hill 628 cost the 8th Rangers two killed and twenty-one wounded. The price was heavy, but as MG Bryan later explained to 1LT Giacherine: "It was necessary and that by the Rangers' reconnaissance he was definitely able to confirm that his entire right flank was exposed. They had prevented the 21st Infantry Regiment from being cut off, and saved the entire 24th Division."[19] The 8th Ranger action at Hill 628 was strictly a conventional infantry response and they suffered heavy casualties because of their size. CPT Martin Blumenson, Fourth Historical Detachment, noted; "The Ranger Company is both too small and too large. It is too small to make a concerted attack five or six miles behind enemy lines by aerial drop. It is too large to infiltrate and penetrate enemy lines as a company."[20] Against all odds on Hill 628, Ranger spirit carried the day.

Eugene G. Piasecki, a retired Special Forces officer, is a government contractor who has been with the USASOC History Office since 2006. He earned his Master's Degree in military history from Norwich University. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, Army special operations in Somalia and the History of Camp Mackall.

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3 John Miller, Jr., Owen J. Carrol, and Margaret E. Tackley, *Korea. 1951-1953* (Washington, DC: U. S. Army Center of Military History, 1997), 103.

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7 First Lieutenant Alfred J. Giacherine, Executive Officer, 8th Ranger Company, interview by Captain Martin Blumenson, 7 June 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, 1.

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9 Giacherine interview, 2. The 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was given the name the "Black Devils" after they were observed putting on face camouflage before a night patrol.

10 Black, *A Ranger Born*, 92.

11 Black, *Rangers in Korea,* 142.

12 Giacherine interview, 4.

13 Black, *Rangers in Korea,* 144.

14 Black, *Rangers in Korea,* 144.

15 Giacherine interview, 6.

16 Giacherine interview, 6.

17 Black, *Rangers in Korea,* 151.

18 Giacherine interview, 9.

19 Giacherine interview, 10.

20 Martin Blumenson note during interview with 1LT Alfred J. Giacherine, Executive Officer, 8th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), 7 June 1951, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, 11.



M46 Patton tank was the type assigned to the 6th Tank Battalion, 24th ID that evacuated sixty-five 8th Company Rangers on 25 April 1951. By the end of the war, the M46 was the Army's primary medium battle tank and had replaced the M24, M26, and M4A3E8.

From Hill 710 to "Big Switch"

Ranger Edmund J. Dubrueil, 1st Ranger Company

by Kenneth Finlayson



The Chinese Spring Offensive in April 1951 pushed the Eighth Army off Line KANSAS and threatened Seoul. The 2nd Infantry Division and their attached 1st Ranger Company were in the thick of the defensive fight.

When the Chinese launched their spring offensive in April 1951, the Eighth U.S. Army defensive Line KANSAS stretched from Seoul to the east coast. The U.S. X Corps and Republic of Korea (ROK) III Corps were positioned in the eastern part. The major Chinese objective was to isolate and destroy the six divisions of the ROK III Corps. Three Chinese Armies, the *12th*, *15th*, and *60th* and the North Korean *45th* and *12th* Divisions hit the ROK III Corps hard, forcing it to pull back, exposing the X Corps flank.[1] The heaviest blows in X Corps fell on the right flank held by the ROK 5th Infantry Division. The 5th gave way in the face of the enemy onslaught, which triggered the withdrawal of the U.S. 7th Infantry Division in the center as well as the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division (2nd ID) on the left.

Attached to the 2nd ID, the 1st Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) found itself in the chaotic battles around Chaun-ni on 16–19 May 1951. These actions rendered the 1st Ranger Company combat ineffective and took Staff Sergeant (SSG) Edmund J. Dubrueil out of the war. SSG Dubrueil joined 1st Ranger Company as a replacement following the battle at Chipyong-ni in February 1951. Dubrueil enlisted in the Army in 1948 and he completed Ranger training at Fort Benning, GA in January 1951. An infantry heavy weapons specialist, he was assigned to Second Platoon.[2]

Since its arrival in Korea in December 1950, the 1st Ranger Company enjoyed



a solid working relationship with the 2nd ID. Major General (MG) Clark L. Rufner supported the need for the Rangers and made every effort to capitalize on their special capabilities.[3] 1st Company raided several enemy installations, including an attack on 4 February on the headquarters of the North Korean *12th Corps* nine miles in the enemy rear.[4] Later, at Chipyong-ni, the 1st Company acquitted themselves well in the first major defeat of Chinese forces. There the Ranger's First Platoon, as part of an *ad hoc* task force containing the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, had driven the enemy off a key hilltop and re-established the main defensive line.[5] Three months after the battle of Chipyong-ni, the 1st Ranger Company was fighting alongside the 23rd Regiment again, this time as part of Task Force ZEBRA.

Originally formed by the 2nd ID on 25 April, at the onset of the Chinese offensive, Task Force ZEBRA was led by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Elbridge L. Brubaker, and made up of the 72nd Tank Battalion (less one company), the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, the 1st Ranger Company, the Ivanhoe Security Force (a rear area security company of ROK troops), and the ROK 3rd Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment. It was a formidable fighting force with considerable firepower.

On 16 May, the Task Force was arrayed along a two-mile wide defensive position astride the Hongch'on River and Highway 24. The U.S. 38th Infantry Regiment was on the task force left and the ROK 5th Division on its right. A French infantry battalion was in reserve to the rear at



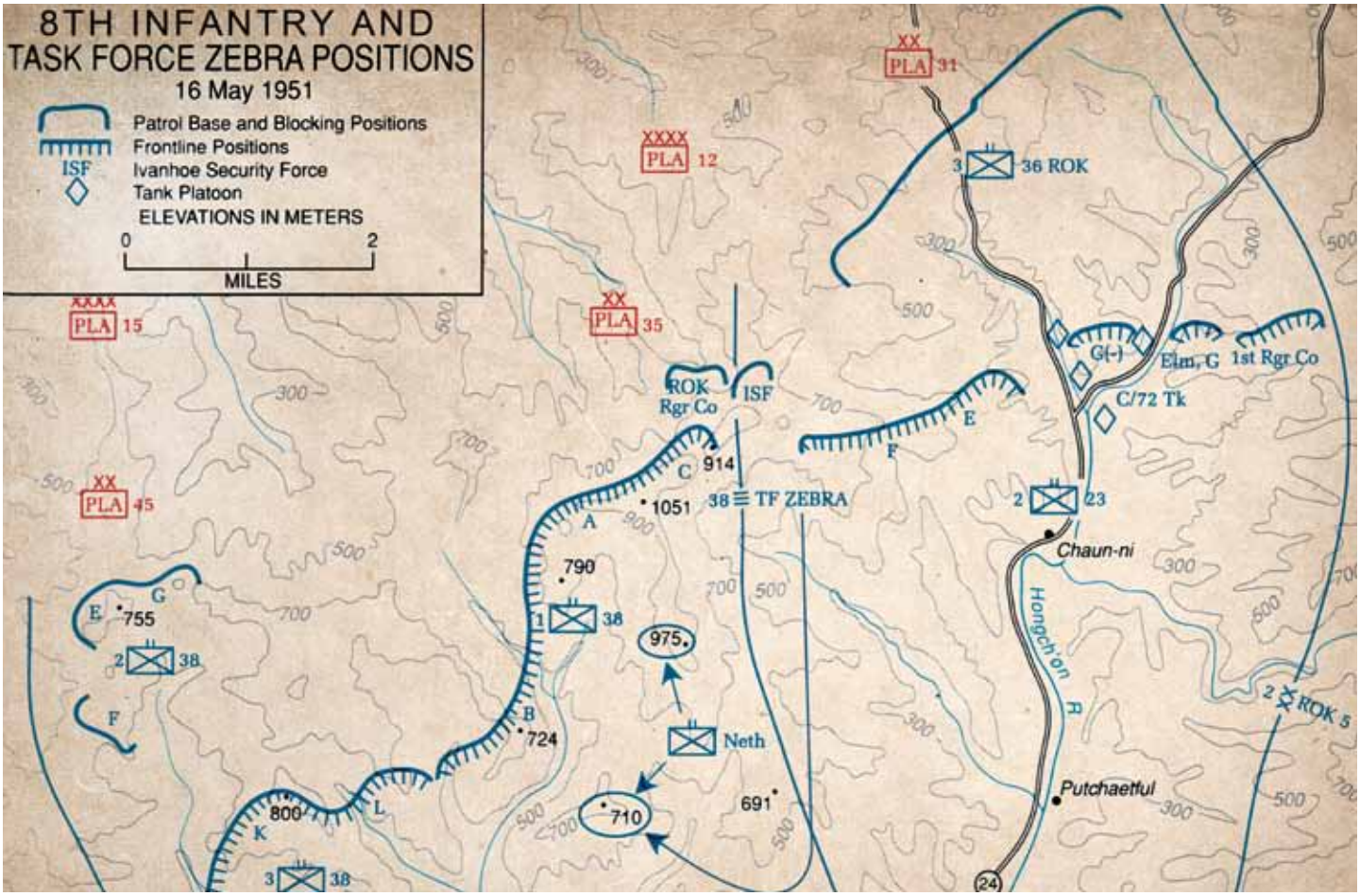
1st Lieutenant Andrew J. Adams receives the Silver Star from Brigadier General George C. Stewart, Assistant Division Commander, 2nd Infantry Division. The first Ranger unit deployed to Korea in December 1950, the 1st Company enjoyed a close relationship with the 2nd Division until the Ranger companies were disbanded in June 1951.



Troops of the 2nd Infantry Division move to occupy new positions near Yanggu. The hard-fighting 2nd Division was a mainstay of the U.S. X Corps.

The 1st Ranger Company conducted a successful raid on the headquarters of the North Korean *12th Corps.* The Rangers moved nine miles into the enemy rear, raided the headquarters and returned to friendly lines.





The Rangers moved south when Task Force ZEBRA was repositioned south to Han'gye. Prior to arriving they were sent to attack west to Hill 710, where the company suffered severe losses.

Han'gye. Two key hills, 975 and 710, were occupied by a battalion of Dutch infantry and overlooked Highway 24 in Task Force ZEBRA's area.[6] When three Chinese divisions crashed into the allied lines on 16 May, the situation rapidly became critical.

The 2nd ID was on the X Corps right (eastern) flank. On the division's right the ROK 5th Division was along the boundary between the U.S. X Corps and ROK III Corps. When the Chinese attacked, the already tenuous connection between the 2nd ID and the ROK 5th Division disappeared as the South Koreans fell back, exposing the American division's flank. Constant probing attacks by the Chinese by-passed the TF ZEBRA position, eventually forcing MG Ruffner to reposition the task force further south in an effort to keep a cohesive defense together. Late on 18 May, with steady Chinese pressure threatening to envelope the 38th Infantry on their left, Task Force ZEBRA began to pull back. Eventually, the Rangers found themselves near Han'gye. In an effort to restore the defensive lines during the chaotic withdrawal of the allied units, Hill 710 became the Ranger Company objective.

The Rangers were trucked south about four miles to Han'gye where they dismounted and received orders to help relieve the Dutch on Hill 710. "We got on trucks going back to the rear," recalled SSG Edmund J. Dubrueil. "We hadn't gone very far when the trucks stopped and we got out. We could hear heavy gunfire and we started walking towards the fight."[7] In darkness the company moved northwest to join the battle.



Soldiers of the 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division on the crest of Bloody Ridge. The "Manchus" fought a ferocious battle to seize the ridge in August 1951.

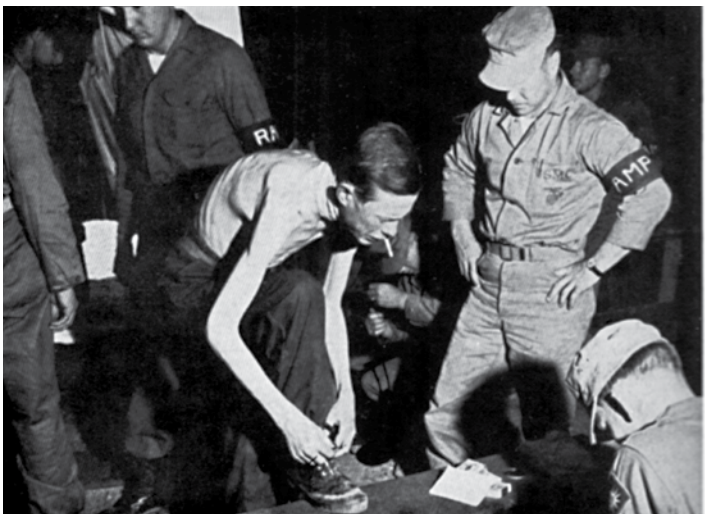
"When we got there, the Dutch were pulling out," said Dubrueil. "We almost got shot by other Americans as we headed up. On the hill, we were mixed up with the Chinese. We got organized and we hit them very hard."[8] The Rangers drove the Chinese troops off the hill and began to set in their defensive positions. At dawn on the 19th, the enemy attacked in strength, forcing the Rangers off the hill.



An aerial view of a camp believed to be used to house UN POWs near Chiktong, North Korea. The barracks have no markings although Communist officials had agreed to mark POW camps.



UN and North Korean officers acknowledge receipt of transferred POWs at Freedom Village, Panmunjom. In Operation LITTLE SWITCH on 11 April 1953, 605 UN POWs were exchanged for 6,030 Communist prisoners.



An emaciated American POW receives new clothing at the transfer station, Freedom Village, Panmunjom.

"I was in a position with [SGT Roy] Evans and [SSG Gordon P.] Lewis. I got hit in the head with a grenade and got shrapnel in my boot," said Dubrueil. "Lieutenant [Company Commander 1LT Alfred H.] Herman got hit by a sniper and [Paul J.] Lotti went to help him. He got hit too. Everyone was moving out at this point."[9] The Rangers began to filter down off the hill. Dubrueil was assisting another Ranger who was badly wounded in the leg when he ran into two Chinese soldiers and was taken prisoner.

Of his initial time in captivity Dubrueil recounted, "I was first taken to a bunker. The Chinese soldiers had never seen an ID card and when I showed it to them, they saluted and gave it back. Then, with other POWs, we started walking north. We walked a lot."[10] After temporary stops at various camps, Dubrueil reached POW Camp #4.

"It was a sergeant's camp up near the Manchurian border. When I arrived, I was originally placed on a burial detail."[11] Dubrueil remained at this camp until he was moved to what was known as Camp #1 during the winter of 1951-52.

> *"The Chinese soldiers had never seen an ID card and when I showed it to them, they saluted and gave it back. Then, with other POWs, we started walking north. We walked a lot."*
>
> *— SSG Edmund J. Dubrueil*

"Camp #1 was a mining camp and there it was very cold. I was very lucky when I got my hands on a pair of gloves," he said. While in the camp, the Chinese tried to "educate" the prisoners. "The Chinese guards did try some indoctrination. I used the story that I was in M Company, 38th Regiment to conceal that I was a Ranger," recalled Dubrueil.[12] He survived the brutal conditions in the mining camp and in August 1952, he was moved back to Camp #4. He would spend the remainder of the war there. As the armistice talks neared their end, conditions in the camps improved.

"I was in Camp #4 about a year to the day I was released. The camp had electricity and just before the war ended, we got Red Cross parcels and could write letters." During his stay at Camp #1, Dubrueil was hospitalized with frostbite, beriberi and dysentery for the two months prior to his release. In the hospital he received rice and three hot meals a day. In August 1953 he was repatriated along with 3,600 other U.S. POWs in Operation BIG SWITCH.[13]

"We were trucked to P'yongyang. The Filipinos were running the exchange point and I went into a tent there. I got coffee and a nurse gave me a vitamin drink," recalls Dubrueil of his repatriation. "We got on a

helicopter and flew to the evacuation point. I was given all my back pay as well as thirty-eight months of jump pay. We took a boat back to San Francisco and were debriefed on the ship."[14] Edmund J. Dubrueil continued his Army career after his return from Korea, eventually retiring from Special Forces.

The battle at Hill 710 was the last major engagement for the 1st Ranger Company. After the battle, only sixty-two Rangers were fit for duty. Nine were captured, including CPT Charles L. Carrier, the Company Commander. Carrier endured eleven months of torture before being executed by his Communist captors. Along with the other Ranger companies in Korea, the 1st was disbanded in June 1951. The majority of the Rangers went to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. Like the other five Ranger Companies in Korea, 1st Company fought with distinction until the changes in the battlefield environment precluded their effective deployment.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.



Former U.S. POWs are escorted down the ramp of the Air Force C-124 that brought them to Tokyo, Japan. Those POWs in need of significant medical treatment were flown to Japan before travelling on to the United States.

Endnotes

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5 Russell A. Gugeler, *Combat Actions in Korea* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2000), 117-124; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 285-291.

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8 Dubrueil interview.

9 Dubrueil interview.

10 Dubrueil interview.

11 Dubrueil interview.

12 Dubrueil interview.

13 Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2005) Appendix B. Operation BIG SWITCH in August 1953 was the largest prisoner of war exchange between the United Nations Command and the Communist forces. In April 1953 there was a limited exchange called Operation LITTLE SWITCH. The exchange of prisoners was a contentious issue during the armistice negotiations largely due to the Communist inflexibility on the matter of giving their soldiers a choice between repatriation and remaining in the south.

14 Dubrueil interview.

The 2nd Ranger Infantry Company

"Buffaloes" in Korea

29 December 1950 - 19 May 1951

by Charles H. Briscoe

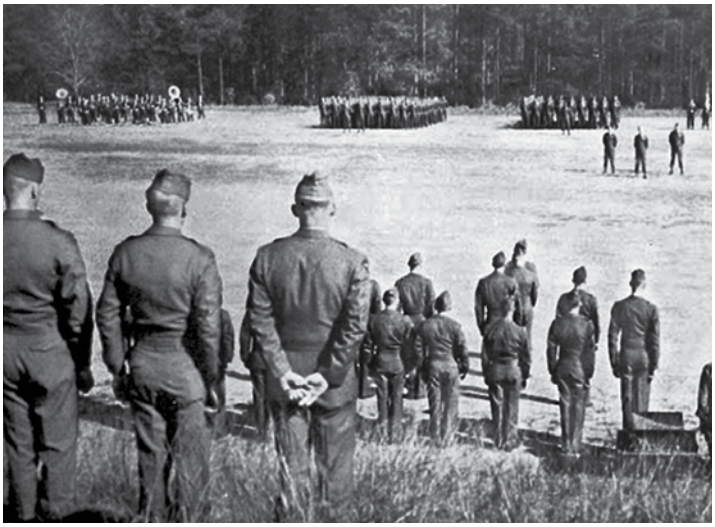
After intense weeks of training at Fort Benning, Georgia, the Army's four newly created Ranger Infantry companies parted ways after their December 1950 graduation. While the 1st Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was rushed to Korea by air, the 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies were shipped by train to San Francisco for a slower journey to war. The 3rd Ranger Company was left behind to train Ranger companies to support all active Army, Army Reserve, and Army National Guard divisions.

The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies maintained unit integrity on board the train carrying them across the country to their port of embarkation. The only exceptions to the unit separation were the cooks, who were all consolidated to operate a single dining car. During the long train ride west, Rangers in both companies began to refer to themselves as "Buffaloes"—simply as an inside joke rising from a city-born Ranger's mistaken identification of longhorn steers for buffalo.[1]

At Camp Stoneman near San Francisco, California, the Rangers exchanged some weapons and received winter clothing, the sum total of which was pile inserts for their field jackets. The 2nd Company, at least, granted no passes to visit the city while it awaited movement orders to ship aboard the USTS *General H. W. Butner*. The two Ranger companies joined a large group of military families on the transport ship for the long trip to Japan. Beyond Hawaii, rough North Pacific seas reduced movie and meal attendance among the Rangers, but the increasingly cold weather helped the men acclimate for Korea.[2]

When the USTS *Butner* arrived at Yokahama, Japan, on 24 December, the two slightly overstrength Ranger companies (5 officers and 105 enlisted soldiers authorized) were met by their executive officers, Lieutenants James C. Queen and John Warren, who had been flown ahead to Japan. The companies loaded their equipment and boarded a train for Camp Zama, northwest of Yokohama, where they celebrated Christmas.[3]

On the 29th of December 1950, the two Ranger companies boarded C-46 Commando and C-47 Skytrain transports at nearby Tachikawa Air Base to fly to K-2, an



The first four Ranger Infantry companies graduated from training at Fort Benning, Georgia, in December 1950. The new Rangers proudly wore the recently approved Ranger tab and the Airborne Ranger Infantry Company scroll, reminiscent of those worn by World War II Rangers.



2nd Ranger Infantry Company at the Columbus, Georgia, train station in December 1950, awaiting transport to Camp Stoneman, California, en route to Korea. Staff Sergeant Cleveland Valrey has his hand raised.



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three men by the end of January 1951. These North Korean artillery pieces were abandoned near Tanyang.

air base near Taegu, Korea. By then, Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) in Korea and the United Nations forces had withdrawn below the 38th Parallel. The 4th Rangers joined the recently arrived 1st Cavalry Division at Kimpo Air Base near Seoul. The 2nd Rangers were attached to 7th Infantry Division (ID) elements near Tanyang.[4]

Major General (MG) Edward M. Almond, the X Corps commander, directed that the 2nd Ranger Company "be moved up as rapidly as possible and employed." Thus, by nightfall on 4 January 1951, the 2nd Rangers were part of the 32nd Infantry Regiment defensive line near Tanyang. After X Corps had been evacuated from Hungnam, General Almond had deployed the 7th ID near Tanyang as part of a defensive line across the peninsula to stem the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) and North Korea Peoples Army (NKPA) counteroffensive. Just before dawn on 6 January 1951, the 2nd Rangers fought their first combat action, from defensive positions abutting a railroad tunnel near the village of Changnim-ni.[5]

By the end of January 1951, combat actions at Changnim-ni, Tanyang, Andong, and Majori-ri had reduced the 110-man company to 63 combat effective soldiers. The high number of frostbite cases prompted the 7th ID to finally issue pile caps and rubber galoshes for the Rangers' boots.[6] Although vastly understrength for the mission, MG David Barr, the 7th ID commander, followed General Almond's directive that all black soldiers assigned to the division be temporarily assigned to the 2nd Ranger Company for basic tactical training.[7]

The task of providing basic combat training—from individual soldiering skills to company-level infantry tactics—to all 7th ID black replacements was rotated among the three 2nd Ranger Company platoons.[8] Those Rangers not serving as cadre supported the offensive operations of the 17th Infantry Regiment in the vicinity of Ch'un ch'ong. On 22 February 1951, the 2nd Rangers were alerted to join the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) for a future parachute operation. 4th Ranger Company was also alerted. First Lieutenant (1LT) James B. Queen, the 2nd Ranger executive officer, and Corporal (CPL) William Weathersbee, the operations sergeant, were driven by Private First Class (PFC) Lester James to K-2 Air Base to establish liaison with the 187th ARCT.[9]

By this time, Chinese and North Korean armies were withdrawing north under pressure from counterattacking American and United Nations forces. To support a IX Corps offensive on 22 March (Operation RIPPER), EUSA had ordered an airborne assault north of Seoul to cut off retreating Communist forces. Operation HAWK called for the 187th ARCT and two Ranger companies to seize key objectives at the north end of the Ch'un ch'ong Basin on 20 March in order to block that escape corridor, and link up with the 1st Cavalry Division moving northwest. The city of Ch'un ch'ong was an important supply and communications point with a good road network in the center of the basin. When Lieutenant General (LTG) Matthew B. Ridgway encountered lead elements of the 1st Cavalry in Ch'un ch'ong during an aerial reconnaissance on 19 March, he canceled HAWK. The objective for the airborne assault was moved further north to Munsan-ni, and the execution date changed to 23 March. The replanned assault was named Operation TOMAHAWK.[10]

Operation TOMAHAWK was the first combat parachute jump ever made by Rangers. The airborne assault was about twenty-four miles northwest of Seoul, near Munsan-ni. The 187th ARCT mission was to smash the withdrawing NKPA *19th Rifle Division* against two tank infantry task forces from the 3rd Infantry Division that would come north on the Seoul–Kaesong Highway (Task Force GROWDEN) and the Seoul–Uijong-bu Highway (Task Force HAWKINS).[11] Concerned about personnel shortages, Captain (CPT) Warren E. Allen, the commander of the 2nd Rangers, had sergeants begin checking daily troop trains for airborne-qualified personnel and wounded Rangers returning from hospitals.[12]

Newly promoted 1LT Albert Cliette, 3rd Platoon leader, was discovered on a train headed back to the 7th ID. Wounded in the leg while "attacking some nondescript hill" in the Ch'un ch'ong operation, Cliette had been evacuated to a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital near Pusan. "When the guys told me about the Munsan-ni operation, I grabbed my .45 caliber Thompson submachine gun and field gear and jumped off that train. It was to be a combat jump—the paratrooper's dream," said Cliette. "1LT Bernard B. Pryor,



Airborne Ranger Infantry Company Scroll



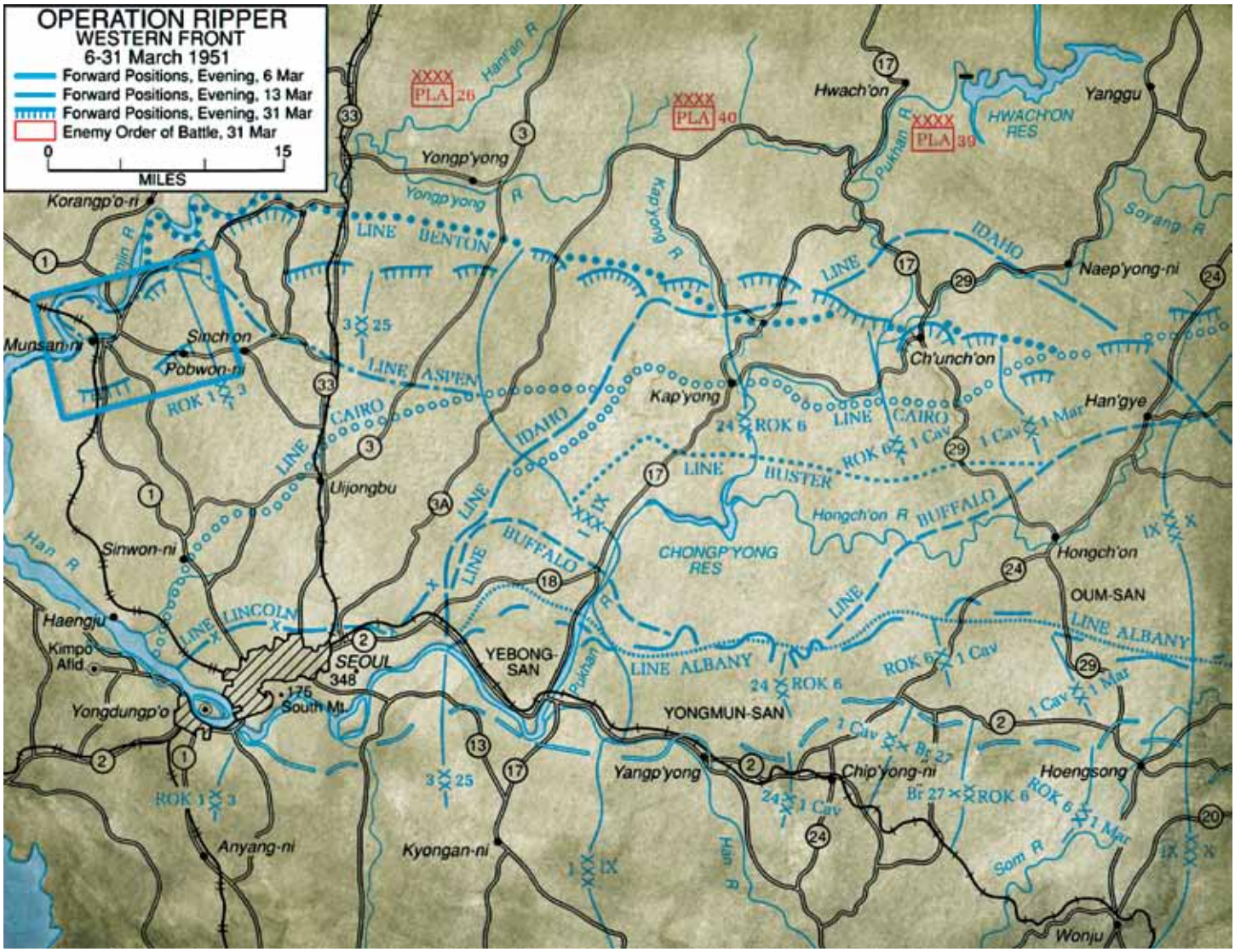
Ranger Tab



7th Infantry Division SSI



1st Cavalry Division SSI



Operation RIPPER was the IX Corps offensive against North Korean and Chinese forces in March 1951. In three weeks, enemy forces were pushed back twenty-five miles north of Seoul.

the 1st Platoon leader, wounded in the same action as me, had fought with Merrill's Marauders in Burma during World War II. His steel helmet saved him from being killed by a sniper's bullet that punched clean through the lieutenant bar on the front. Fortunately, the bullet, slowed by the helmet liner, just plowed across the top of his skull, neatly parting his scalp. Because the top of his head was super-sensitive afterwards, Pryor couldn't wear a helmet. He couldn't jump without a helmet so he was put in charge of bringing the individual 'A and B bags,' supplies, mess team, and two Korean officer interpreters to the drop zone aboard a truck convoy. Unsure about the Korean attachments, they tried to reassure us by saying, 'Do not worry about us. We watch you guys and do what you do. Everything OK.'"[13]

By 28 February 1951, the 2nd Rangers had joined the 4th Rangers at K-2 Air Base, near Taegu, for Operation TOMAHAWK. Attached to the 2nd Battalion, 187th Infantry, the Rangers were assigned to a group of squad tents next to an apple orchard. "There was no dispersion of the units, just row after row of tents. Air attack did not appear to be a concern," said Sergeant (SGT) Joe C. Watts of the 4th Ranger Company. "The tents had straw-filled mattress ticks for sleeping."[14] "I knew it would be a combat jump when the MPs [military police] locked the K-2 airfield gate behind us," said PFC Donald Allen, an original recruit from K Company, 3rd Battalion, 505th Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

The Rangers and the 187th dedicated two weeks to preparing for the mission. The Rangers practiced small unit infantry tactics from squad to company level; zeroed their rifles, carbines, Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), and .30 caliber M-1919A6 light machineguns; and fired the two-part 3.5-inch antitank rocket launchers and 60 mm mortars. The officers focused on learning 187th ARCT standing operating procedures (SOP). The 4.2-inch heavy chemical mortar, fougasse (a field-expedient jellied gasoline explosive in fifty-five gallon drums), and aerial resupply were also demonstrated by the 187th. Only supplies and ammunition would be airdropped during Operation TOMAHAWK. Planning was aided by the terrain sand table that CPL Weathersbee built. During the Rangers' stay at K-2, replacements from the States arrived to fill losses.[15]



To facilitate unit assembly after the parachute assault, the 2nd Rangers painted gold and silver parachute wings on the sides of their helmets, as First Lieutenant Al Cliette (above) has for his Silver Star award ceremony.



The 187th Infantry "Rakkasans" marked their helmets with a divided half-round pattern: 3rd Battalion had three vertical bars, 2nd Battalion had two bars, and 1st Battalion had one bar, while the Headquarters half-round remained solid white.



The 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team jumped from the twin-tail boom C-119 Flying Boxcar on Munsan-ni, as they had on Such'on and Sunch'on in October 1950 during the Eighth U.S. Army drive to P'yongyang and the Yalu River.



The 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies jumped on Munsan-ni from World War II-vintage C-46 Commando aircraft. The planes had a distinctive "pregnant guppie" fuselage shape, and two sets of doors: the smaller right-side door was for parachutists, while double doors on the left side facilitated loading heavy equipment.



Before being used for jumps in the Korean War, the C-47 SkyTrain, carried cargo over the Burma Hump into China, and conveyed the bulk of Allied paratroopers and gliders to Normandy on D-Day June 1944.



A four-engine C-54 Skymaster led the airborne armada to the Munsan-ni North and South Drop Zones, and provided command and control for the assault.

1LT Antonio M. Anthony, who received a battlefield commission with the 92nd ID in Italy during World War II, brought thirty black airborne Ranger replacements from Fort Benning, Georgia. The 7th Company in the Army Ranger Training Command had a black platoon specifically to provide replacements to the 2nd Rangers. When the men arrived, they were spread throughout the company. At a special 187th ARCT jump school, two 7th ID black soldiers, tactically trained by the 2nd Rangers, also became airborne qualified.

On 16 March 1951, the 2nd Ranger Company conducted two practice jumps using the daily C-46 mail aircraft. These were the unit's first jumps since leaving Georgia. Before these training jumps, the Rangers practiced parachute landing falls off the back of the 2½-ton mess truck.[16] Shortly after the practice jumps, the rains came.

Inclement weather delayed the scheduled airborne assault. While they waited for the weather to clear, the 2nd Rangers painted large parachute badges on the sides of their steel helmets. The silver "jump wings" were painted on a black oval background with a thin gold border—the black and gold of the Army Ranger shoulder tab insignia.[17] Helmets of the 187th ARCT ("Rakkasans") were painted with a white "rising sun" half-round pattern on the sides for easy identification—solid for the Regimental headquarters; 1st Battalion had one vertical divider; 2nd Battalion had two vertical dividers; and 3rd Battalion insignia had three dividers.[18] These helped paratroopers scattered in the air to assemble into units after landing.

Following 187th SOP, individual weapons were jumped "exposed"—wedged under straps of the T-7 parachute harness and reserve parachute "belly band." Even .30 caliber BARs and 3.5-inch rocket launchers were jumped exposed on A-frame boards. The canvas (Griswold) weapons

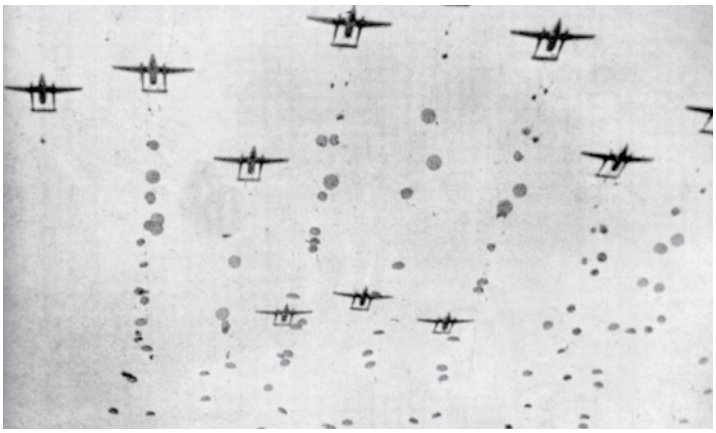
containers that required taking weapons apart were not used. Most Rangers "were loaded for bear" when they jumped. Private Billy Thrasher, a 4th Ranger BAR man, carried eighteen magazines of .30 caliber ammunition, four fragmentation grenades, and two 57 mm antitank rounds. The Rangers, like the 187th "Rakkasans," wanted to be ready to fight as soon as they cleared their parachutes.[19]

The twelve door bundles in A-22 canvas containers kicked out by each company had colored parachutes: pale yellow with bright yellow stripes for the 2nd Company's light machineguns, mortars, and ammunition; and yellow with red stripes for the 4th Company. After the jump, Rangers made scarves and lined their wool blankets with parachute silk to keep warm.[20] Though a combination of camouflage, white, and colored parachutes became available, the camouflage silk was the most popular.[21]

On 21 March eighty C-119 transports from the 437th Troop Carrier Wing at Ashiya Air Base, Japan, and fifty-five C-46 and C-47 aircraft from the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron at Brady Air Base, Japan, were assembled at K-2 to support two combat air assaults on 23–24 March. C-119s typically carried forty-six men in two "sticks" of twenty-three men each, fifteen monorail bundles, and four door bundles. The C-46 and C-47 aircraft carried twenty to twenty-eight paratroopers and three door bundles each. The C-119 aircraft scheduled to carry heavy drop loads (75 mm pack howitzers and 105 mm artillery, ¼-ton Jeeps and trailers, ¾-ton weapons carriers, ammunition, water, and supplies) had their rear clamshell doors removed prior to departing Japan. The large troop carrier armada was led to the drop zone by a C-54 Skymaster four-engine transport, piloted by Brigadier General John P. Henebry, the 315th Air Division commander.[22] Just before separating to board their aircraft, CPT Allen gathered the 2nd Rangers together for a moment of silent prayer, and then wished them well.[23]

On Good Friday, 23 March 1951, at 0750 hours, in the second aircraft serial five, eight World War II era C-46 Commando transports took off from K-2 carrying the 2nd and 4th Ranger companies. The three 187th parachute infantry battalions and the 674th Airborne Field Artillery Battalion (105 mm, 75 mm, and quad-.50 caliber antiaircraft artillery guns) flew in new twin-boomed C-119 Flying Boxcar transports and the C-47 and C-46 aircraft. The armada of 140 air transport planes flew out over the Yellow Sea, arranged themselves in nine-plane staggered "V of V" formations with separation between serials, and then headed inland to the two drop zones. While the troop carriers were en route, the two drop zones and the Seoul-Munsan road were bombed and then strafed by sixteen F-51 Mustang fighter-bombers intent on eliminating reported enemy antiaircraft artillery sites in the area. Surrender leaflets had been dropped on several locations in and around the area several days before the operation in order to deceive the enemy as to the exact location of the paradrops.[24]

Surrender leaflet drops and two broadcast C-47s ("The Voice" and "The Speaker") were effectively employed to support the airborne operation. On 19 March, 250,000 leaflets were dropped over Hungsu-ri. Bad weather on 20 March prevented leaflet operations, but the next day, 750,000 were dropped on Sariwon. On the 22nd, another 250,000 were scatter-dropped from Mindong to Sokkyo-ri, and over Ch'un ch'ong. Aerial broadcasts warned civilians to stay away from Communist troops and installations at nine different points in North Korea.[26]



C-119s flew in "V of V" formation for the airborne assault on Munsan-ni.



Leaflets depicting invading paratroopers and tanks surrounding enemy positions implored North Korean and Chinese troops to surrender. Such leaflets and safe conduct passes proved effective tools against soldiers often pressed into service by the Communists, and were utilized at Munsan-ni.

The 2nd Rangers and 2nd Battalion, 187th ARCT, jumped at H-hour—0900 hours local time—on Drop Zone North. 4th Rangers, in the same serial, jumped five minutes later.[27] In about fifty minutes, some thirty-five hundred paratroopers, equipment, and several batteries of howitzers and antiaircraft artillery were dropped on Drop Zone North. *Stars and Stripes Pacific* reporters jumped with the 4th Rangers. In the midst of searching for their 60 mm mortars, light machineguns ("light thirties"), and the ammunition bundles, and attending to jump injuries, the men of the 2nd Ranger Company were surprised when paratroopers of the 1st Battalion, 187th Airborne Infantry, began dropping on Drop Zone North.

The 1st Battalion was supposed to jump to the southeast on Drop Zone South, near its objectives. Because the lead aircraft with the battalion commander aboard developed engine problems, his replacement airplane inadvertently became the unofficial single airplane "Sixth Serial," and was the only 187th ARCT dropped on Drop Zone

South. Having noted the obvious 1st Battalion foul-up, the Rangers hurried to their assembly areas, picking up some surrender leaflets and safe conduct passes on the way for souvenirs.[28]

Yellow marker panels identified the 2nd Ranger Company assembly area on the northwest side of Drop Zone North. The 4th Ranger Company was to gather at a green panel highlighted by green smoke. The additional use of smoke turned out to be a bad idea, because green smoke was the ground signal for a "Go" on the parachute drop and was used five times for the five airdrop serials. Thus, the sign built to be displayed after the jump with the words, "Have no fear, the Rangers are here," was lost in the green smoke—as were many of the 4th Rangers trying to find their assembly area.[29]

"The Voice"

Oneof the biggest Psywar operations early in the war was conducted in support of the 187th ARCT jump on Munsan-ni. Four C-47s dropped surrender leaflets from low altitudes. The leaflets pointed to the massive show of force and urged Communist soldiers to surrender. Some 127 North Korean soldiers surrendered, each carrying a safe conduct pass. The Loudspeaker aircraft flew as often as six times per day for seven days in support of the Munsan-ni operation.

During the airdrop mission, one of the C-119s from the 315th Troop Carrier Wing, which arrived in Japan in late 1950, was badly hit and the crew bailed out. The crew members were spotted by a sister C-47, "The Voice," circled their position and talked to them via the loudspeaker system to determine their health and status. The airmen on the ground used the cloth panels from survival kits to spell out "Yes" and "No" responses. "The Voice" circled for three hours until a rescue helicopter arrived to safely pick up the crew.[25]



A female ROK Army Psywar broadcaster standing beside one of the U.S. Air Force C-47 loudspeaker aircraft before a mission. The C-47 loudspeaker plane "The Voice" broadcast surrender appeals to North Korean and Chinese forces in conjunction with Operation TOMAHAWK. They also warned civilians to stay clear of specific locations where engagements were planned.

While a Psywar C-47 was broadcasting around the two drop zones from low altitude, General Douglas A. MacArthur watched the ground activity from high overhead in his Lockheed C-121 Constellation aircraft. LTG Matthew B. Ridgway landed on Drop Zone North in an L-5 liaison aircraft, just before 1st Battalion was mistakenly dropped there. The general managed to escape just as the next flight began dropping paratroopers.

The Psywar C-47 overflew the drop zones after the last airdrop serials to broadcast warning messages telling the North Korean and Chinese troops that they were surrounded and cut off from retreat or aid. The C-47 also dropped another 750,000 surrender leaflets emphasizing the parachute and tank envelopment.[31] After the airborne drop, over a hundred enemy soldiers appearing waving these safe conduct passes.

In the course of three days, 1.3 million more leaflets were scattered on the enemy north of Uijong-bu, caught between the 187th ARCT advance to the east and the I Corps northward drive. One leaflet was specifically addressed to the Chinese *78th Division*, whose flank had been exposed by the withdrawal of the NKPA *First Corps*.[32] The first North Koreans captured had these surrender passes, and after that, the numbers capitulating were so great that paratroopers and Rangers stopped counting.[33] Still, the assembling paratroopers and Rangers had to eliminate pockets of resistance near their assembly areas.

First Sergeant (1SG) Lawrence D. West, one of the first Rangers to arrive at the 2nd Company assembly area located by an orchard, spotted two enemy machinegun positions overlooking the assembly area. Gathering a group of early arrivals, 1SG West, and 1LT "Big Jim" Queen, who was carrying an M1 Garand, ordered bayonets "fixed" and proceeded to attack the two machinegun positions before the enemy could react. Two Communist soldiers were killed, and two more were wounded and captured. The two *36th Regiment, 19th North Korean Division*, soldiers were the first prisoners of war taken during Operation TOMAHAWK.[34] Other North Koreans abandoned stockpiled ammunition and rations, fleeing with just their weapons. In addition to the two prisoners of war, the Rangers turned over a Russian Maxim .31 caliber heavy water cooled machinegun to the 187th ARCT S-2.[35] Having eliminated the immediate threat, the 2nd Rangers assembled, got accountability (verified the presence of all personnel and critical equipment), and moved to clear the village of Sandokso-ri en route to their primary objective, Hill 151.[36]

Sergeant First Class (SFC) James E. Freeman, acting 1st Platoon leader, led the attack on the Communist forces in the village of Sandokso-ri. The Rangers fixed bayonets and assaulted. The attack was a fast, violent, furious fight that resulted in six enemy soldiers killed and another twenty captured. Before momentum was lost, Captain Allen prepared to seize Hill 151, the unit's primary objective. The North Koreans were direct-firing 76 mm artillery at the 674th Field Artillery Battalion positions on Drop Zone North. The company 60 mm mortars were brought



The narrow valley running northeast from Munsan-ni afforded the Rangers and "Rakkasans" a relatively small margin of error in hitting their drop zones. The wet, uneven surface and the rice paddy dikes provided a less than ideal drop zone.

up to "prep" the hill. As the mortar barrage began, 1LT Queen and SGT Marion "Mighty Mouth" Austin, the communications sergeant with the AN-GRC 9 radio, verified their location on the unit's only map and called the U.S. Air Force for close air support.[37]

At approximately 1030 hours, the 2nd Rangers, supported by their 60 mm mortars and several F-51 Mustang fighter aircraft, commenced to attack Hill 151. The strafing Mustangs, with shark teeth painted on their engine cowlings, came in so low over the attacking Rangers that the shell casings raining down from their six .50 caliber machineguns bounced off the men's steel helmets. PFC William Van Dunk, a Ranger replacement from Fort Benning (originally with the 80th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division), fell wounded in the thigh just as the assault started. SFC Daniel Boatwright and SGT Smead Robertson were also wounded clearing the objective.

After consolidating and reorganizing on Hill 151, the wounded were collected for evacuation to the 60th Independent Indian Field Ambulance Unit on Drop Zone North. The airborne medical team had dedicated U.S. Air Force Sikorsky H-5 helicopters for serious injuries. As SGT Boatwright, SGT Robertson, and the attached 187th ARCT medic, moved back down Hill 151 to collect PFC Van Dunk for medical evacuation, they found him dead from shock.[38]

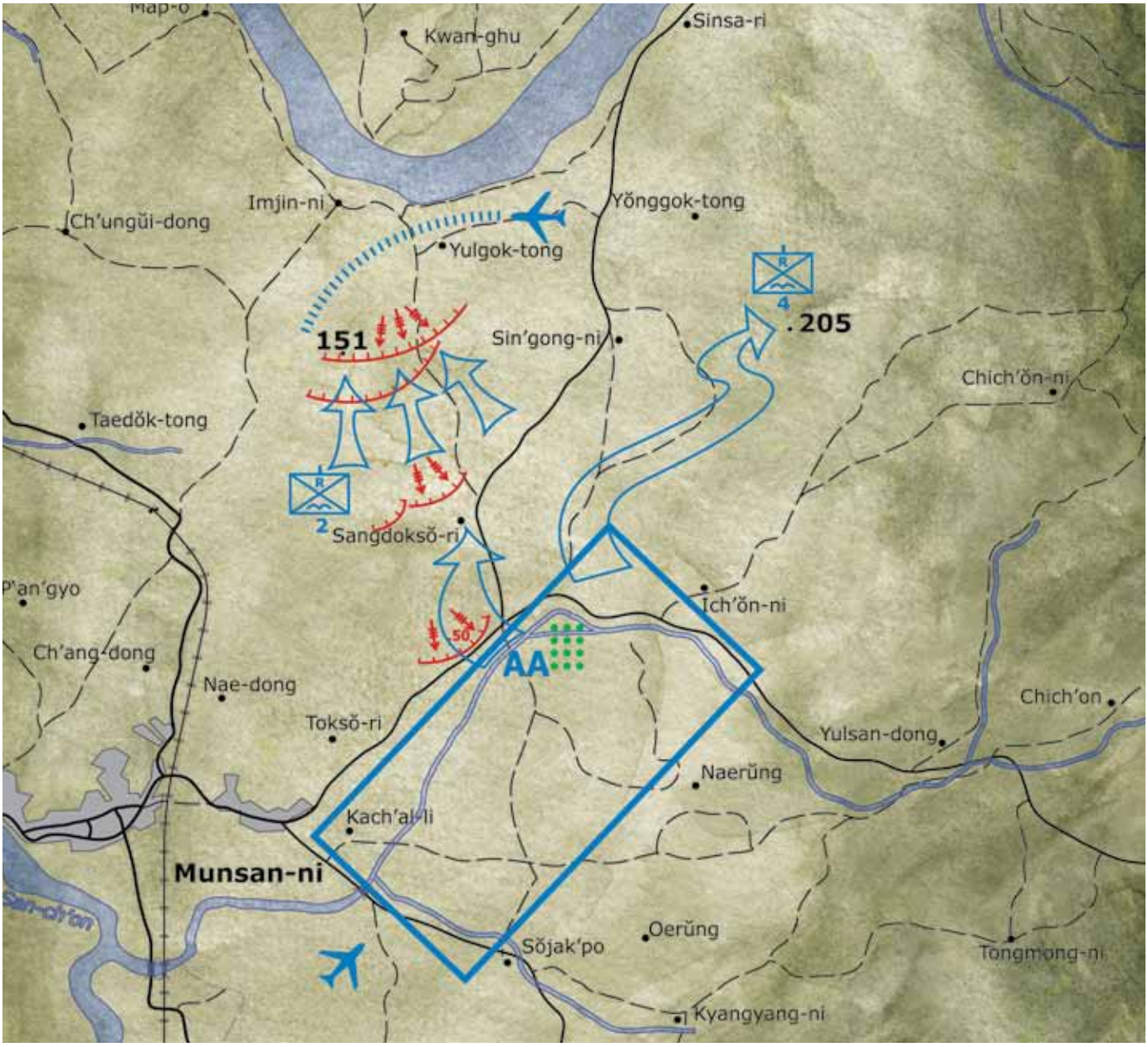
The turbaned Indian Army medics created quite a stir among the American paratroopers and Rangers. PFC Patrick J. "Paddy" Purcell, 4th Ranger Company, was knocked unconscious when he landed. When the Irishman regained consciousness, he regaled later, "Here was a large black-bearded Indian medic cutting my parachute harness off. I could remember thinking before the jump, 'Good Friday—it was no better time to be in the sky close to God.' Sure and Bejesus I knew I was going to meet my maker, but I didn't know that he would be black."[41] Men with jump injuries and combat wounds were treated swiftly by the Indian doctors and medics, placed in the patient pods of the H-5 helicopters, and then whisked away. Twenty minutes later they were unloaded at a field hospital in Taegu.[42]

While the 2nd Rangers had great success on 23 March, the 4th Ranger Company, encountering stiff resistance on their objective—Hill 205—did not enjoy the same good fortune. In fact, as the 2nd Rangers were linking up with the tank-heavy Task Force GROWDEN at 1848 hours that day, the 4th Rangers had pulled back into a night defensive perimeter below their objective after two unsuccessful assaults.[43]

"Those guys had a tough time," said 1LT Queen, who talked afterwards with their executive officer, 1LT John Warren. "Every time the assaulters threw a grenade up the hill, the enemy caught it and tossed it back at them. Hill 205 had steep sides, and only a single exposed trail went to the top. That objective was really tough."[44] Huddled against a slight depression at the base of the vertical butte, the enemy continually dropped grenades down on the 4th Ranger attackers. The narrow base of the concave refuge quickly eroded into a very steep, slippery moraine that extended more than a hundred feet to the rice paddies below. The Rangers "climbed deep into their steel helmets as they hugged the depression wall," trying to survive the constant falling grenades. Fortunately, most were concussive rather than fragmentary. Hill 205 was key terrain that favored the North Korean defenders.[45]

Ranger SGT Joseph C. Watts, Jr. remembered: "That hill stuck up there like the obstacle it was, jutting and seemingly pointing toward the clear blue sky."[46] "Rakkasan" PFC Robert Schusteff had oriented himself in the air by locating Hill 205—the most prominent terrain feature on the northernmost tip of Drop Zone North.[47] The south side of the butte, much like those in the American Southwest, was vertical, with a view of

This map is based on accounts and sketches by 1LT James C. "Big Jim" Queen, 2nd Ranger Company.



As part of Operation RIPPER, the 23 March airborne assault—Operation TOMAHAWK—took place northwest of Seoul near Munsan-ni. Accompanying the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team—the ""Rakkasans"—the 2nd and 4th Rangers made the first ever Ranger combat parachute jump. The drop altitude was nine hundred feet above ground level, but the terrain at the north end of Drop Zone North gradually rose in height. The rise was so significant that all paratroopers were warned not to jump after the Red Light came on, because aircraft would bank away to the northeast to avoid higher elevations to the northwest. Once on the ground, the 2nd Rangers' objective was Hill 151 and the 4th Rangers' was Hill 205.[30]

Drop Zone North; the north side had been sharply cut by the Imjin River, which was over a hundred feet below. On Hill 205, "best described as a hill on a hill," the stubborn defenders poured a heavy volume of small arms fire down on the attacking Rangers, while the 674th Field Artillery Battalion on Drop Zone North provided little assistance that first day.

Sixteen sorties of close air support—F-80 Shooting Star jets and F-51 Mustang fighters—fired rockets, delivered napalm, and strafed Hill 205 with .50 caliber machinegun fire the next morning. With such heavy air support, the 4th Rangers took their objective that afternoon. In their



General MacArthur nicknamed his U.S. Air Force C-121 Constellation aircraft "SCAP"—short for Supreme Commander Allied Powers in Japan.

"first blooding," the 4th Rangers had suffered one man killed (CPL Frederick Manship) and nine men wounded in action.[48] In the meantime, the 2nd Rangers had been shifted to support Task Force GROWDEN, which had been sent to join the 1st Battalion, 187th ARCT, in the vicinity of Drop Zone South. The tank-heavy task force had suffered significant losses moving to Munsan-ni, and was glad to have the Rangers perform advance guard for them.

Task Force GROWDEN had lost four M46 medium Patton tanks, two Jeeps, and an armored scout car to enemy antitank mines, and two more Pattons to NKPA artillery as the task force traveled to join the 187th ARCT.[49] Still, the linkup proved to be a reunion for the black officers in the 2nd Rangers. Lieutenants Van Exel and A.C. McLean, two of the tank company commanders (6th Medium Tank Battalion) in Task Force GROWDEN, had served in the 758th Tank Battalion of the all-black 92nd ID in World War II, and later in the all-black 64th Tank Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The number of black officers in the Army during World War II and Korea was very small; almost everyone knew one another from Officer Candidate School days at Fort McClellan, Alabama, or through prior service together.[50]

A 2nd Ranger platoon was detailed to augment security for the road-bound M46 tanks. They were welcomed aboard the tanks as the heavy vehicles lumbered off in the darkness to find the 1st Battalion, 187th ARCT, marching to join its battalion commander on Drop Zone South. The 1st Battalion objectives were attacked a day late.[51]

The rest of the 2nd Ranger Company established a perimeter defense on Hill 151, organized combat patrols, and sent foraging parties to Drop Zone North for rations, water, parachute silk, and to find 1LT Pryor with the land convoy. The 2nd Ranger Company, like the 187th "Rakkasans", had jumped with "horseshoe bedrolls"—a GI wool blanket and poncho wrapped in half of a canvas "pup tent" (shelter half)—typical of the adage, "Travel light, freeze at night," because temperatures in that region still dropped below freezing in late March. Just before dark, the 187th ARCT convoys arrived from Taegu, as a heavy fog settled in the low areas.[52]

From 24 to 27 March, the 2nd Ranger Company (-) patrolled in advance of the 3rd Battalion "Rakkasans" as they moved east to gain control of Highway 33. This "highway" paralleled the railroad, and was a major north–south route into Seoul. By the afternoon of 27 March, the 4th Ranger Company was operating on the left flank of the 2nd Rangers. On 28 March, the 2nd Rangers met advance elements of the 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division (ID), pushing north along the highway. Following the 3rd ID linkup, the final 2nd Ranger mission with the 187th ARCT was to provide security for A Company, 64th Tank Battalion. Elements of the 4th Rangers had been providing security for a 674th Field Artillery Battalion battery when they were released from attachment to the 187th ARCT.

While the 2nd Rangers arranged their usual *ad hoc* transportation aboard trucks and began the journey from





▲Lieutenant Colonel A.G. Ranga Raj, 60th Independent Indian Field Ambulance Unit commander, and his surgical teams jumped with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team at Munsan-ni on 23 March 1951.[39] *Photo attributed to Life magazine.*



Air Force Sikorsky H-5 helicopters with patient pods flew medical evacuation missions from Drop Zone North near Munsan-ni to Seoul, twenty minutes away.[40] *Photo attributed to* Life *magazine.*

Suwon to Taegu, the 4th Rangers boarded Korean "40 x 8" (forty men or eight horses) boxcars for the trip home. The 2nd Rangers arrived at Taegu in the early morning hours of 31 March 1951. It took several days to get all of their individual equipment back from Munsan-ni. They then rejoined the 7th ID on 7 April to resume training black soldier replacements.[53]

The 2nd Ranger Company trained black replacements for 7th ID until early May 1951. The initial tasking was to give fifty-two black replacements two weeks of basic infantry training. Then, another seventy-eight soldiers were attached, followed by eleven more, and so on. By 30 April 1951, the 2nd Ranger Company morning report



▲F-80 Shooting Star jets and ▼F-51 Mustang fighters provided close air support to the 2nd Ranger and 4th Ranger assaults on Hills 151 and 205.





The 2nd Rangers provided advance guard security for the M46 Patton medium tanks of Task Force GROWDEN after they joined the 187th ARCT at Munsan-ni.

reflected 125 men assigned, and 282 men attached for training. This was, in fact, a reduction from the peak of 440 attachments on 24 April.[54]

Following the basic training model in the Army, 2nd Rangers formed specialized instructor groups and rotated replacements through formal programs of instruction. CPT Allen organized committees to teach infantry tactics (from the fire team to company level), rifle marksmanship, tactical radio classes, and soldiering skills. He added "a good dose" of bayonet, hand-to-hand, and physical fitness training. The length of basic combat training had been reduced so drastically in the U.S.—to fill the understrength post-World War II divisions and offset wartime casualties—that replacements arrived in Korea lacking basic soldiering skills. 1LT Queen even tasked a black bandsman to learn Communist Chinese Forces bugle calls using a captured manual.[55]

In return for the additional training duty, the 2nd Ranger Company received a small *quid pro quo.* MG Claude B. Ferenbaugh, who replaced General David G. Barr, allowed CPT Allen to select ten Ranger replacements. Washington DC, the hometown of 1LT Queen, proved to be the common denominator among those selected to stay in the 2nd Rangers. Queen knew many of them from his days as a Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps colonel.[56] Integration was late coming to X Corps while MG Almond commanded in Korea. Still, the 2nd Rangers managed to keep an attached white medic, PFC Frank Russo, throughout the replacement training.[57]

For more than three months (mid-February to late April 1951), the four 2nd Ranger platoons rotated between training replacements and serving on the 7th ID combat outpost line. On 23 April 1951, after a major Chinese offensive against the entire Eighth Army front broke through the ROKA 6th ID and exposed the 7th ID flank, the 2nd Ranger Company (-) was quickly attached to the 31st Infantry Regiment, the division reserve. To cover the exposed flank, the Rangers were moved into the gap between the 7th ID and the ROKA 3rd Infantry Regiment. Heavy casualties among the 7th ID infantry regiments forced integration.[58]

On 29 April, the Rangers were moved to the 17th Infantry Regiment to cover the 7th ID withdrawal across the Soyang River. As the major elements of the division were pulling back, the 2nd Rangers patrolled aggressively to maintain contact with Communist forces.[59] This mission concluded 2nd Ranger Company combat operations in Korea between 29 December 1950 and 30 April 1951. During this time, the Rangers fought with the 7th ID, conducted basic infantry training for 7th ID black replacements, and made the Munsan-ni combat parachute jump while attached to the 187th ARCT for Operation TOMAHAWK.

With the Munsan-ni operation, both the 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies jumped into airborne history and earned a combat star on their parachute badges. Shortly after their arrival in Korea, 2nd Rangers proved themselves in combat in early January 1951. Providing basic infantry training to 7th ID black replacements—though not regarded by the "Buffaloes" as an appropriate use of very highly-skilled and combat effective Rangers—kept many a black soldier alive in Korea and was appreciated by those men the Rangers trained, according to CPL Bill Weathersbee:

"I was one of the last of the 2nd Ranger Company to rotate to the States from the 187th Airborne RCT. We traveled on the USTS *Jose P. Martinez.* When the ship docked at Seattle and we were getting ready to go ashore, several black members of the 7th Infantry Division told the Rangers on board that they wanted to talk to us. The ranking noncommissioned officer (NCO) in the group spoke: "We would like to thank you and your unit, the 2nd



The 2nd Ranger Company spent April 1951 training black replacement troops for the 7th Infantry Division. The battle-hardened Rangers taught the green soldiers the combat skills they needed to survive the war.

Ranger Company, for the training that was given to us when we arrived in the 7th Infantry Division. That training was the key to our survival. All training we had prior to that time was meaningless. They said 'Thanks,' we shook hands all around, and we went our separate ways." [60]

This article would not have been completed without the assistance of two 2nd Ranger Company stalwarts, Major James Queen, company executive officer, and Sergeant First Class William Weathersbee, company operations and intelligence sergeant, and unit historian. It was written to honor the "Buffaloes," but especially as a tribute to Rangers Queen and Weathersbee.

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

1 William Weathersbee notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as the Weathersbee Collection; Albert Cliette, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 1 October 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), 40; Victor J. Bond, "The History of the 2nd Ranger Company," (MMAS Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2003), 20. As the two Ranger companies crossed the American West by train, one city-raised Ranger, spotting a herd of cattle, yelled, "Look at the buffalo!" The "buffalo" were in fact long-horned steers. From then on, both companies referred to themselves as "Buffaloes." Former SFC William Weathersbee, the 2nd Ranger Company historian, was assigned to the 2nd Platoon as a rifleman and also served as company operations sergeant. Weathersbee, originally assigned to the all-black 555th "Triple Nickels" Parachute Infantry Regiment in June 1946, was later assigned to the S-2 Section as a Reconnaissance Scout Observer in the predominantly black 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division in 1948, after graduating from U.S. Army Photo Interpreters and Enlisted Intelligence courses. Second Lieutenant Albert Cliette, another former member of the 3rd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, was 3rd Platoon Leader, 2nd Ranger Company. His platoon sergeant was Sergeant First Class Robert O. Watkins.

2 Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003.

3 James C. Queen, Paul Lyle, Donald Allen, and Winston Jackson, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 17 December 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, hereafter cited as Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; J.C. Watts, Jr., *Korean Nights: 4th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) 1950–1951* (St. Petersburg, FL: Southern Heritage Press, 1997), 86.

4 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 86.

5 Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; 2nd Ranger Company Morning Reports, 31 December 1950 and 5 January 1951, Weathersbee Collection; 7th Infantry Division G-3 Reports, 30 and 31 December 1950, Entry 429, Record Group 407, National Archives; 7th Infantry Division Periodic Intelligence Report 70, 6 January 1951, Entry 429, Record Group 407, National Archives.

6 Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 31 December 1950, Weathersbee Collection.

7 LTC Victor J. Bond, "The History of the 2nd Ranger Company," 25, 34.

8 The most outspoken Army opponent of integration was Lieutenant General Edward M. Almond, X Corps commander, and former Chief of Staff for General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, Japan. Almond had a poor opinion of colored soldiers based on his experience as the Commanding General of the 92nd Infantry Division (Colored) in World War II. His guidance was specific: "There will be no mixed units in X Corps. If the Ranger Company (2nd) under this policy becomes excessively overstrength—separate colored units will be formed." 7th Infantry Division, G-3 Log, 020950 February 1951, Entry 429, Record Group 407, National Archives. Twenty years later, Almond re-emphasized his views. Letter, Lieutenant General Edward Almond to Center of Military History, 1 April 1972, Center of Military History, Carlisle Barracks, PA. The term "colored" was an official U.S. Army term and is used in that context where needed.

9 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 1 October 2003; 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 31 December 1950; Weathersbee Collection; Headquarters, Eighth U.S. Army, General Order 108, 28 February 1951, Entry 429, Record Group 407, National Archives.

10 Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1967), 115; John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea 1950–1953* (New York, NY: William Morrow and Co., 1991), 421–22.

11 Albert Cliette, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 3 October 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, hereafter cited as Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 91; Larry E. Ivers, "Ranger History: 2nd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) 1950–1951," *The Ranger Link*, Winter 1994, 25–6; Arch E. Roberts, *Rakkasan!* (Nashville, TN: Printing, 19), 48; Watts, *Korean Nights*,132; "Operation KILLER had turned into a slow, not too profitable chase. In Tokyo, in Seoul, and at the Eighth Army command post, the planners were working over a new operation which might panic the Reds or chew them up or possibly trap them. It was a high-speed precision maneuver: an airborne regiment was to drop twenty-five miles northwest of Seoul; an armored column was to link up with them there." John Dominic and Joe Scherschel, "Airborne and Armor Link Up in Korea," *Life*, 9 April 1951.

12 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003.

13 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003.

14 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 133. Some of Rangers came by train while others hitched rides on 7th Infantry Division trucks bound for Taegu to pick up ammunition. Queen interview, 17 December 2003.

15 Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Queen Interview, 17 December 2003. Operation TOMAHAWK was entirely dependent on airdrops for resupply. In fifty-six resupply drops between 24 and 27 March, Air Force cargo planes provided 264 tons of ammunition, food, and gasoline for the airborne task force. Fred J. Waterhouse, *The "Rakkasans"* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing, 1991), 71–72.

16 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Weathersbee Collection; Roberts, *Rakkasan!*, 47. First Lieutenant Antonio M. Anthony became the Mortar Platoon leader. During the Korean War, parachutists received either jump pay or combat pay, but not both for combat jumps.

17 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Weathersbee Collection; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 157; Headquarters, 187th Regimental Combat Team, "Marking of Aerial Delivery Containers," 20 March 1951, Entry 429, Record Group 407, National Archives.

18 Roberts, *Rakkasan!*, 29.

19 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 147.

20 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Weathersbee Collection.

21 D.M. Giangreco, *War in Korea 1950–1953* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1990), 187–188; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 138–39.

22 Waterhouse, *The "Rakkasans"*, 69, 70; Roy E. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June–November 1950)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), 654.

23 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003.

24 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Weathersbee Collection; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 135–137. C-119 Flying Boxcar transports could carry forty-six paratroops and nineteen door bundles. Edwin P. Hoyt, *On to the Yalu* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 239. Note: The two Ranger companies kicked out twelve door bundles from their C-46 Commando aircraft. Each Commando carried thirty jumpers. Aircraft and ground photos substantiate that the "V of Vs" aircraft formation was maintained during the airdrop while several accounts state the aircraft flew in trail to drop the paratroopers. Since the elapsed flight time from K-2 to Munsan-ni via the Seoul South checkpoint was so short, switching 140 aircraft from "V of Vs" at staggered heights to a long trail formation would have meant extending total drop time for five serials—fifty minutes (187th Regimental Combat Team After Action Report). Fifteen seconds between paratroop aircraft and substantially more time between the heavy drop serial and between heavy drop aircraft would have tallied to an hour and a half total drop time minimum. While the plan originally called for specific elements to be dropped on the north half and south half of Drop Zone North, this did not happen. And, factoring that 1st Battalion 187th Infantry, excluding the commander and half of his staff who were dropped alone on Drop Zone South later, were mistakenly dropped on Drop Zone North, lends further doubt to the aircraft dropping paratroops and heavy equipment in trail formation.

25 Stephen E. Pease, *Psychological Warfare in Korea, 1950–1953* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 54–55, 61. The 6167th Operations Squadron, B Flight with its C-47s, evolved from the Kyushu Gypsies of the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron, originally from Clark Air Force Base, Philippines.

26 Colonel Kenneth K. Hansen, *Psywar in Korea* (Washington, DC: Joint Subsidiary Activities Group, OJCS, 1960), 196–197.

27 187th Regimental Combat Team Staff Journal Entry 23 March 1951 from Watts, *Korean Nights*, 138, 143.

28 Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; U.S. Army. 2nd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) Morning Report dated 23 March 1951; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 91-92; Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 196–197; Roberts, *Rakkasan!*, 52. Corporal Glenn Jenkins Jr. and Private First Class Eugene Coleman were lightly injured during the parachute assault.

29 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Weathersbee Collection; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 157; Headquarters, 187th Regimental Combat Team, "Marking of Aerial Delivery Containers," 20 March 1951.

30 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 135, 138–39.

31 Waterhouse, *The "Rakkasans"*, 70. Just prior to the Munsan-ni parachute assault, the Air Force dropped tens of thousands of leaflets. After the drop, hundreds of enemy soldiers appeared waving these safe conduct passes.

32 Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 196–197.

33 Hansen, *Psywar in Korea*, 196–197. One prisoner of war was so anxious to produce the correct safe conduct pass that he proffered them like a bridge hand. He was very proud of his collection because the political officer searched the soldiers in his unit daily for United Nations leaflets and surrender passes.

34 187th Regimental Combat Team Staff Journal Entry 23 March 1951; 2nd Ranger Company notes from Weathersbee Collection; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 92–93. The unit identity of the North Korea People's Army (NKPA) prisoners of war coincided with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team intelligence brief: they were from the *19th Rifle Division* from the NKPA *VI Corps* and the *8th Rifle* and *17th Mechanized divisions* from the NKPA *I Corps*. Watts, *Korean Nights*, 136–37.

35 187th Regimental Combat Team Staff Journal Entry 23 March 1951; 2nd Ranger Company notes from Weathersbee Collection; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 92–93. Interestingly, a 187th Regimental Combat Team After Action Report dated 12 July 1951 credited I Company, 2nd Battalion, 187th Regimental Combat Team, with capturing this machinegun and discounted how difficult the terrain was and how well defended Hill 205, the objective assigned to the 4th Ranger Company, really was. 187th Regimental Combat Team After Action Report dated 12 July 1951 in Watts, *Korean Nights*, 177.

36 187th Regimental Combat Team Staff Journal Entry 23 March 1951; 2nd Ranger Company notes from Weathersbee Collection; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 92–93; Queen Interview, 17 December 2003.

37 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003. The 2nd Rangers attacked with shining bayonets to gain a psychological advantage. Maps were in short supply at the company; Lieutenant Queen, the executive officer and a former heavy mortar platoon leader, carried the only map because he was the fire support coordinator for the company.

38 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003. The 187th ARCT medic had checked Van Dunk just after he was shot. Determining that the wound was not life-threatening, he had given him a cigarette and moved on. The Ranger companies did not have assigned medics; medics were attached. That was how Private First Class Russo, a white medic, came to serve with the 2nd Ranger Company for more than sixty days.

39 Roberts, *Rakkasan!*, 50.

40 Roberts, *Rakkasan!*, 50.

41 Lieutenant General E. M. Flanagan Jr., *The "Rakkasans": The Combat History of the 187th Airborne Infantry* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1997), 198.

42 Lieutenant Colonel Wes McPheron, "Operation Tomahawk," *Stag*, April 1950, 51; Flanagan, *The "Rakkasans": The Combat History*, 196; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 132. Task Force GROWDEN consisted of the 6th Medium Tank Battalion, a rifle company from the 7th Infantry Regiment, and a battery of 105 mm artillery.

43 Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 93.

44 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003.

45 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 130, 150, 153.

46 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 145.

47 Flanagan, *The "Rakkasans": The Combat History*, 198.

48 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 174; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 93.

49 Flanagan, *The "Rakkasans": The Combat History*, 198. Lieutenant Colonel John S. Growden commanded the 6th Medium Tank Battalion of M46 Patton tanks. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, 676. Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway, Eighth U.S. Army, Korea commander, had flown over Task Force GROWDEN en route to the Munsan-ni Drop Zones. At 0730 hours, two M46 tanks had already been disabled by land mines on the road. Toland, *In Mortal Combat*, 422; Lt. Col. Wes McPheron, "Operation Tomahawk," *Stag*, April 1951, 16–17, 51–52.

50 Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 166.

51 Watts, *Korean Nights*, 166; Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Weathersbee Collection; Waterhouse, *The "Rakkasans"*, 71.

52 Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Weathersbee Collection.

53 Weathersbee Collection; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 93; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Queen Interview, 17 December 2003; Watts, *Korean Nights*, 169. The 2nd Rangers could always count on the 666th Truck Company, an all-black unit, which had been assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC.

54 Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 102; Bond, "The History of the 2nd Ranger Company," 30.

55 Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003.

56 Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Bond, "The History of the 2nd Ranger Company," 35.

57 On 26 July 1948, President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981, "Desegregation of the Armed Forces," directing "that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons of the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible." www.ourdocuments.gov; Weathersbee Collection.

58 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 24 April 1951, Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 102.

59 2nd Ranger Company Morning Report, 24 April 1951, Weathersbee Collection; Cliette Interview, 3 October 2003; Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 102.

60 Weathersbee Collection.

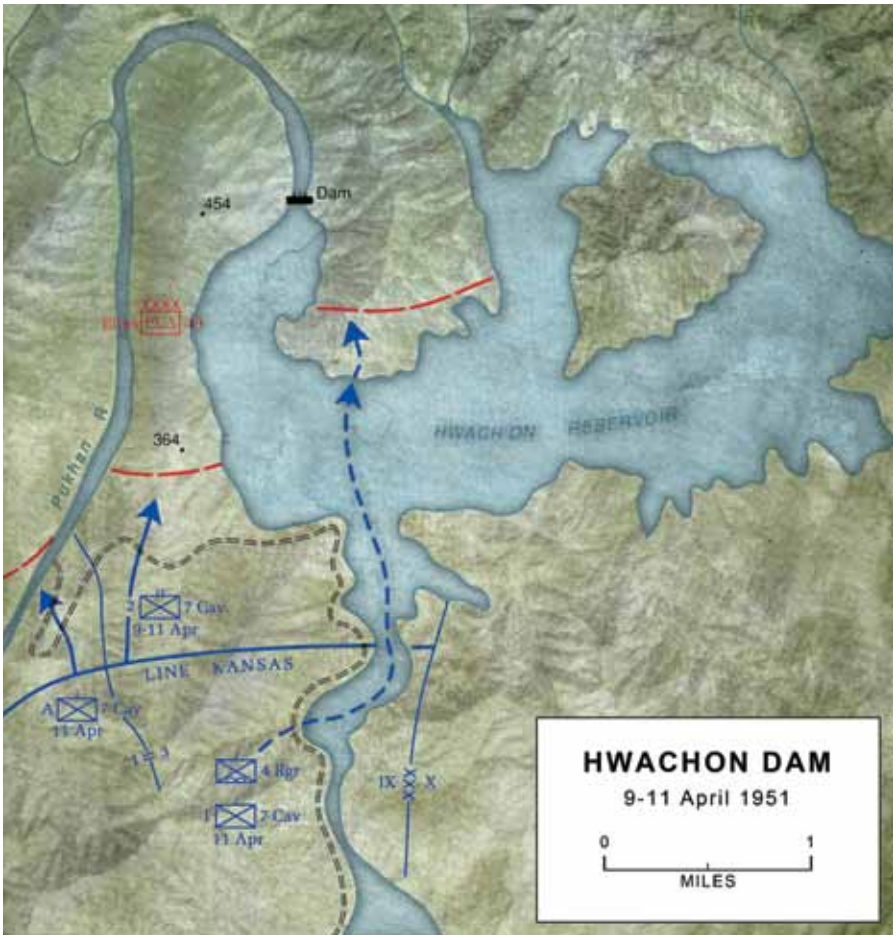
"That D****d Dam"

The 4th Ranger Infantry Company and the Hwachon Dam.

by Kenneth Finlayson

One of the principal difficulties faced by the Ranger companies in the Korean War was a lack of suitable targets that fit their mission profile. Too often the Rangers found themselves as the "Palace Guard" at the division headquarters, or used as a reserve element to be plugged into holes in the line. The 4th Ranger Company's amphibious assault against the Hwachon Dam on 10 April 1951 is an unusual and notable example of their proper employment.

The third largest dam on the Korean peninsula at 875 feet long and 275 feet high, the Hwachon blocked the Pukhan River and formed a reservoir 13 miles long and one mile wide. The dam was in the northwest corner of Hwachon Lake that ran roughly east to west. Eighteen sluice gates controlled the flow of water and provided hydroelectric power to Seoul sixty miles to the southwest. A lack of roads in the steep rugged hills around the reservoir was significant. As the Eighth Army drove the Chinese north with Operation RIPPER, the dam became a strategic target in the U.S. IX Corps area.



An aerial view of the Hwachon Dam. The Ranger assault began in the small cove at the bottm of the map and landed at the peninsula in the center. The Rangers only reached a point halfway along the ridge.

Operation RIPPER was General (GEN) Matthew B. Ridgway's March 1951 offensive to retake Seoul and push the Chinese and North Korean forces north of the 38th Parallel. As Operation RIPPER's objectives were achieved, the follow-on offensive, Operation RUGGED continued the drive north. The goal of RUGGED was to advance north to Phase Line KANSAS, which ran from the south bank of the Imjin River in the west to Chuch'on-ni.[1]

The Hwachon Dam lay just on the north side of Phase Line KANSAS. The Pukhan River bisected the IX Corps operational area. The dam loomed over the heart of the Corps sector and the imminent danger that the Chinese would flood the plains to the south brought the importance of Hwachon into sharp focus.

On 8 April 1951, twenty Chinese soldiers and five North Korean technicians began opening the sixteen gates of the spillways. Without motors to raise the massive 20 x 60 foot gates, each took ten hours to manually open completely. With four

gates fully opened and six partially raised, the Pukhan River rose seven feet, washing out a railroad abutment downstream and caused the IX Corps engineers to pull in several pontoon bridges, limiting movement in the Corps rear area. The threat posed by more flooding prompted GEN Ridgway to order IX Corps to immediately seize the dam and disable the sluice gates.

Major General (MG) William M. Hoge, commanding IX Corps, had the 1st Cavalry Division directly south of the reservoir along Line KANSAS. The division commander, Brigadier General (BG) Charles D. Palmer, faced a dilemma. On 8 April the 1st Cavalry started conducting a relief-in-place with the 1st Korean Marine Division. The planning to effect the hand-off with the Korean Marines was well underway, and the 1st Cavalry units were poised to come off the line and head south to refit and rearm. The relief was scheduled for two successive nights, 9 and 10 April. If the 1st Cavalry did not take the dam before the relief was complete, several days would pass before the Marines would be in a position to assault it and eliminate the threat of more flooding.

MG Hoge told BG Palmer to use the 4th Ranger Company to disable the dam before the division pulled off Line KANSAS. The Rangers joined the division on 7 April after being released from the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team.

Hoge did not direct that the mission be limited to the Rangers.[2] Thus BG Palmer assigned the mission to Colonel (COL) William A. Harris, whose 7th Cavalry Regiment was the unit closest to the reservoir, and attached the 4th Ranger Company to them.

MG Hoge wanted the Rangers to disable the gears of the dam sluice gates with explosives to prevent the Chinese from opening more of them.[3] For the Ranger commander, Captain (CPT) Dorsey B. Anderson, this mission was tailor made for his unit. While the company was trucked to an assembly area just south of Line KANSAS on 8 April, CPT Anderson met with the 1st Cavalry Division G-3, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) John Carlson. The Ranger commander recommended that they conduct a night crossing of the reservoir in assault boats, plant demolitions on the gate mechanisms, and then withdraw.

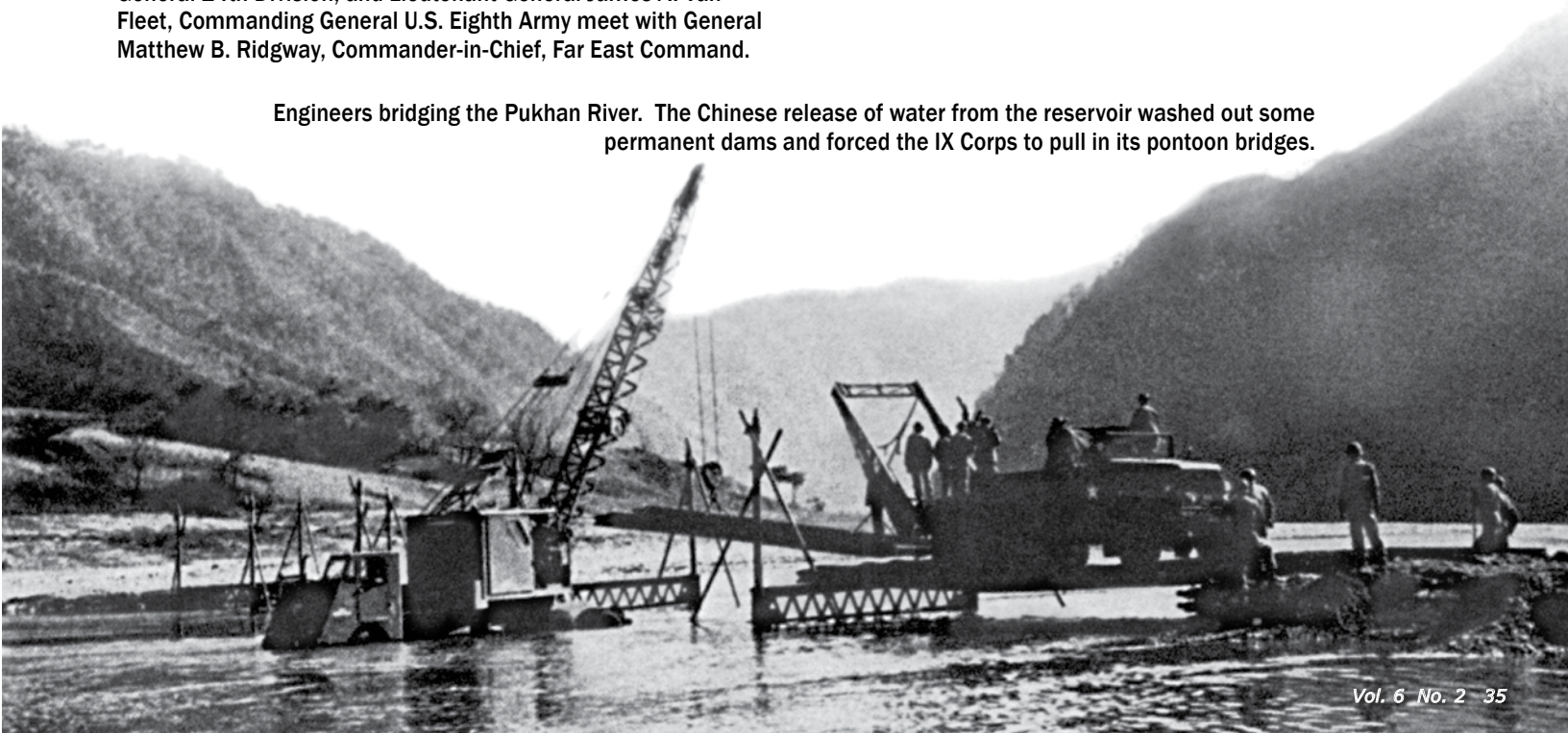


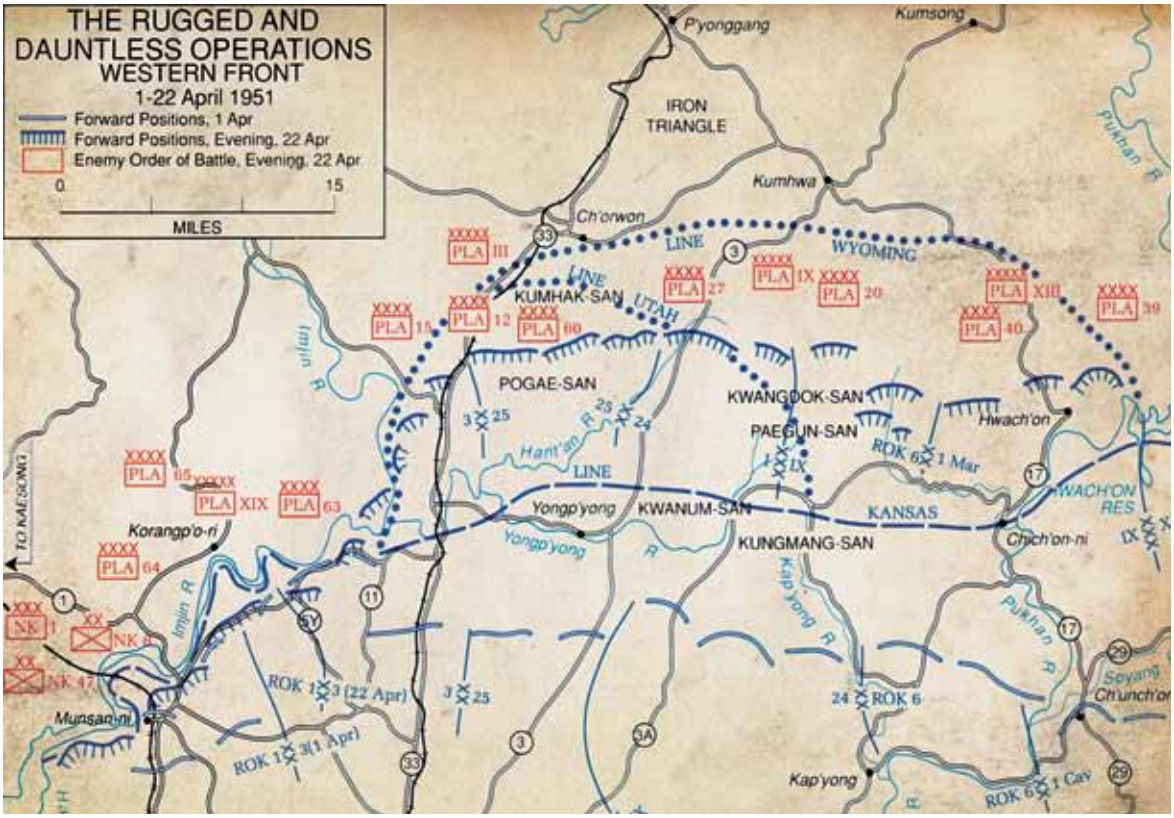
L to R. Major General William M. Hoge, Commanding General IX Corps, Major General Blackshear M. Bryan, Commanding General 24th Division, and Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet, Commanding General U.S. Eighth Army meet with General Matthew B. Ridgway, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command.



L to R; General Matthew B. Ridgway, Major General Charles D. Palmer, Commander 1st Cavalry Division, Colonel William A. Harris, Commander, 7th Cavalry Regiment and Colonel John Daskopoules, Commander of the UN Greek Battalion at Chipyong-ni, February 1951. The 4th Ranger Company was attached to Harris' 7th Cavalry for the assault on the Hwachon Dam.

Engineers bridging the Pukhan River. The Chinese release of water from the reservoir washed out some permanent dams and forced the IX Corps to pull in its pontoon bridges.





General Matthew Ridgway's Operation RUGGED was designed to drive the Communist forces north off the KANSAS Line to the WYOMING Line and set the stage for a UN push into the Iron Triangle. By 22 April 1951, Ridgway's forces had reached the KANSAS Line. Shortly thereafter the Chinese launched their Spring Offensive and recovered their lost territory.

Carlson initially demurred, because the Rangers would have to paddle across the lake in broad daylight on their return. Carlson favored a plan whereby the 7th Cavalry Regiment moved overland to seize the dam. Then, the Rangers could disable the sluice gates.[4] While the division staff worked on this alternate plan, Anderson conducted his reconnaissance.

CPT Anderson visited the dam at Chongp'yong with Major (MAJ) Russell J. Wilson of the 8th Engineer Combat Battalion.[5] He learned that to disable the eighteen gates meant that the Rangers would have to carry an inordinate amount of explosives and would require several hours to methodically incapacitate the gates. Then Anderson did an aerial reconnaissance of the Hwachon Dam from a light observation plane. From the air he discovered good and bad elements. "The ground appeared even more rugged than I anticipated," said Anderson. "If we crossed in boats, we would have to land about a mile short of the dam. But, there did not appear to be any enemy positions guarding the dam."[6] By then, the 1st Cavalry's plan had done away with the amphibious assault crossing of the reservoir and 7th Cavalry Regiment would seize the dam by a ground attack.

> *"If we crossed in boats, we would have to land about a mile short of the dam. But, there did not appear to be any enemy positions guarding the dam."*
> — CPT Dorsey B. Anderson

At noon on 9 April, LTC John W. Callaway, the commander of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, ordered F Company to seize the dam. The Rangers were to follow directly behind the infantry company's advance so that they could execute their demolition mission when the dam was taken. Moving slowly over the very rugged terrain, F Company got within two miles of the dam before encountering resistance. In their first contact, the company commander was killed and the attack against the Chinese, in well-concealed defensive positions below the dam, stalled. As night fell, Callaway halted further attempts. Preparations were made to resume the assault the next morning. Based on the Division operations order, the next day his battalion would be the only 1st Cavalry unit still on the line. On the morning of the 10th, F Company attacked again, but made no headway in the rough, broken terrain. They suffered six killed and twenty-seven wounded in the second attempt.[7]



Troops of the 7th Cavalry Regiment in combat. The 7th received the mission to capture the Hwachon Dam while the rest of the 1st Cavalry Division was being withdrawn off the line.

When MG Hoge visited BG Palmer on the morning of the 10th, he became upset when he discovered that the Rangers were not leading the assault on the dam. He ordered the 7th Cavalry to make a "bona fide attempt" on the dam.[8] While an energized division staff worked on a plan, the Chinese inexplicably closed the six gates that they opened two days earlier. The waters of the Pukhan began to recede.

Then, on the afternoon of the 10th, MG Hoge decided to let the relief-in-place go as planned. COL Harris gave orders to cease operations at 1700 hours and begin pulling the men off the line into assembly areas for the move south.[9] Anticipating a well-earned rest, the men began packing equipment and preparing to leave the line. But, at 1700 hours, Hoge changed his mind and ordered Palmer to make a third attempt on the dam. This time, the 1st Cavalry operation included an amphibious assault by the Rangers.

BG Palmer and COL Harris had to halt the relief of the 7th Cavalry and send it back into combat. The 1st Cavalry was in disarray with units already moving south tying up most of the division's trucks. Some of the assault boats used for earlier crossing operations had already been turned in to the supply depot at Chunchon and others had been given to the Korean Marines. The division G-4 worked frantically to get some boats and to move the necessary explosives and ammunition up the single rough road to the designated launch site for the Rangers. Of the twenty boats located, ten were on the wrong side of the river. With the pontoon bridges out, the trucks carrying them had to make a long detour to reach the reservoir. Ultimately, only ten boats (one unserviceable with a hole in the bottom), and four outboard motors were provided for the Ranger crossing.[10]

COL Harris' plan called for two diversionary attacks by his 1st and 2nd Battalions. The 3rd Battalion was held in reserve to reinforce the Rangers when they reached the dam. Two batteries of 8" howitzers (17th Field Artillery Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division) and one battery of 155 mm howitzers (4th Field Artillery Battalion, 1st Marine Division) were in direct support. The heavy guns had to fire at maximum range. The steep rough terrain and lack of roads nearer the dam prevented using the quick firing 105 mm artillery to support the attack. Fog, rain and sleet eliminated air support.[11]

On the south shore of the lake, Anderson and his men prepared for the assault. Lacking trained boat operators and outboard motor mechanics, COL Harris sought volunteers with boating experience. With these *ad hoc* skippers, CPT Anderson loaded two Ranger platoons, artillery and mortar forward observers and twenty machinegunners and mortar men from M Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment into the nine small plywood assault boats. 1st Lieutenant (1LT) Michael D. Healy's First Platoon was the lead element in three boats. CPT Anderson, the forward observers, and weapons sections followed in three more. 1LT Joseph W. Waterbury's Second Platoon trailed in the remaining three craft. At 0345 hours they pushed off and began

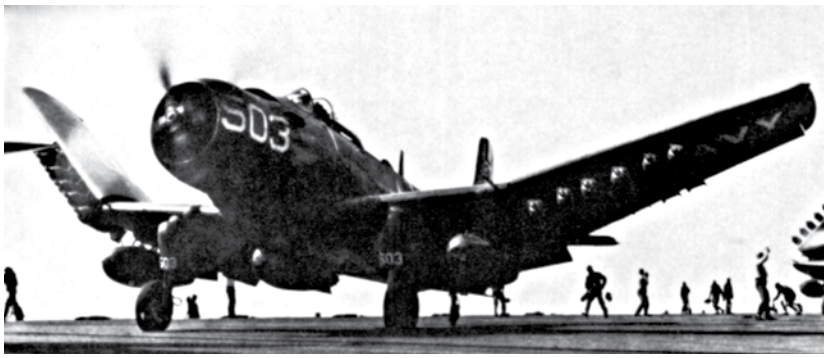


A Battery, 17th Field Artillery firing their 8" howitzers in April 1951. The impassable terrain near the dam precluded bringing the artillery in close to give more accurate fire support to the Ranger assault.

The Rangers used plywood assault boats to cross the Hwachon Reservoir for their assault on the dam. The first waves had to paddle their craft across the reservoir. *(Illustration by Mariano Santillan)*



Aerial view of the dam under attack by U.S. Navy AD-6 Skyraiders.



A flight of Navy AD-6 Skyraiders carrying torpedoes disabled the sluice gates on the Hwachon Dam after the ground attacked failed. This AD-6 is unfolding its wings prior to taking off from the USS *Princeton*.

a stealthy paddle across the reservoir to the landing area a mile away from the dam.

Undetected during their 45-minute approach, the Rangers landed as dawn broke. 1LT Healy immediately took a section of five men up the ridge to the high ground above the landing area and below the dam. Anderson started the remaining seventy men, the rest of Healy's platoon in the lead, up the hill. Anderson trailed behind them with the command section. Waterbury's platoon was in the rear as the Rangers began the arduous climb up the steep hill.

Nearing the top, 1LT Healy and his small section saw men ahead through the heavy mist waving at them. Uncertain if they were Chinese or 7th Cavalry troops who had come overland, Healy and his men pressed on. As they topped the crest, they recognized the padded uniforms of Chinese soldiers just as a long burst of machinegun fire was directed at them.[12] As Healy and his team crawled forward, a recoilless rifle team coming up behind them took out one of the Chinese machineguns. The Ranger lieutenant and his men used grenades to knock out another and the Chinese fled down the backside of the hill. By then it was 0615 hours and the Rangers were still a half-mile from the dam. CPT Anderson paused to take stock of the situation and decided to wait for the third platoon now being ferried across the reservoir.

The first three boats of the original wave had returned to the embarkation point to load up two squads of 1LT James L. Johnson's platoon. The earlier firing negated the need for stealth, but when the volunteer coxswains tried to start the outboard motors, they wouldn't fire, forcing the Rangers to paddle hard across the lake. The two squads reached the landing site at 0700 hours. The Executive Officer, 1LT John S. Warren, the remaining Rangers and five Korean laborers, loaded ammunition into four more boats. This time the motors started and the boats quickly sped across the reservoir. But, as they approached the landing, they came under fire. Warren turned them around and returned to the launch site. Seeing the boats being driven off, CPT Anderson decided not to try to move directly to the dam.

Fearing the Chinese could cut him off on his flank, Anderson sent Johnson's fresh platoon through Healy's and along a finger to a small hilltop overlooking the shore. With Rangers on this hill, the enemy could not outflank the company. But, as Johnson and his men started along the finger, heavy small arms fire halted their advance. Fifty or sixty Chinese troops charged the spread-out platoon and were finally repulsed with hand grenades.[13] This action triggered an all-out enemy assault.

The first Chinese attack was immediately followed by bugles and massive waves of several hundred soldiers pouring down from the higher ground on the right of the Ranger Company position. Vicious hand-to-hand fighting finally halted the Chinese attack. Anderson realized that reaching the dam was impossible. He radioed for permission to withdraw. The 7th Cavalry S-3 told him to stay put because a rifle company from 3rd Battalion was enroute. With their ammunition running low, the Rangers dug in to await reinforcement.

COL Harris decided to send the entire 3rd battalion across the reservoir to assist the Rangers. Ten additional boats had been delivered and I Company, which had road marched to the launch point, began loading up. 1LT Warren, the Ranger Executive Officer, went along to guide them to the landing beach.[14] The infantry company, the squad from 1LT Johnson's platoon, and the Korean ammunition bearers with their loads began arriving at 1330 hours. Sergeant (SGT) William V. Goolsby, a Ranger medic brought a wounded soldier down to the landing site for evacuation. He helped guide the new arrivals up the hill.[15] Soon there were more than 300 American soldiers on the hill with plenty of ammunition. Anderson was again confident that they could reach the dam.[16] But MG Hoge had changed his mind again.

The IX Corps Commander, after talking with BG Palmer, decided not to commit more troops. He recommended calling off the attack unless the Chinese withdrew. Since the floodwaters were receding, urgency had waned. As night approached, COL Harris radioed Anderson to pull everyone out, with the Rangers leading the withdrawal.[17]

The Rangers pulled back through the defensive perimeter of I Company. The Chinese made no effort to interfere with the American withdrawal. By 2030 hours, the Rangers had recrossed the reservoir. The men of I Company had to repel another attack before they could pull out.

The results of the reservoir fight were: 4th Ranger Company, two men killed, a third died of wounds the following day, eleven were wounded, and one man suffered a broken leg in a fall. M Company had one man killed and one wounded. I Company had three wounded. Ironically, when the Rangers returned to the embarkation point, CPT Anderson noticed that Korean laborers were still bringing ammunition and supplies forward.

On paper, the amphibious assault on Hwachon Dam was a mission designed for the Rangers. Despite resupply and transportation problems, minimal planning time and ineffective artillery support, the reinforced Rangers were poised to accomplish their mission when recalled. This operation demonstrated the skill and tenacity of the 4th Ranger Company and the professionalism of the 7th Cavalry Regiment. The Hwachon Dam was a difficult task in the best of circumstances. The only amphibious assault by a Ranger Infantry company in Korea was doomed by inadequate fire support, lack of tactical air, and the loss of the element of surprise. Ultimately on 1 May 1951, U.S. Navy AD-6 Skyraiders from Fighter Attack Squadron 95 destroyed the two center gates with torpedoes, preventing the Chinese from flooding the area for the remainder of the war.[18]

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

Endnotes

1 Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington DC, Center of Military History, 2000), 347-367.

2 Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 356.

3 In April 1951, the Hwachon Reservoir was roughly half full. The spring snow melt would fill the reservoir, but if the level rose above the height of the dam, surplus would exit through the overflow spillway in a controlled manner eliminating the danger of artificial flooding in the Corps sector. Later the gates could be repaired.

4 Martin Blumenson, "The Rangers at Hwachon Dam: An Operation in Frustration," *Army* December 1967, 39.

5 Dorsey B. Anderson, interview by Martin Blumenson, 13 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

6 Dorsey B. Anderson, interview by Martin Blumenson, 13 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 359; Martin Blumenson, "The Rangers at Hwachon Dam: An Operation in Frustration," 39.

7 John W. Callaway, interview by Martin Blumenson, 17 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361; Blumenson, "The Rangers at Hwachon Dam: An Operation in Frustration," 40.

8 William M. Hoge, interview by Martin Blumenson, 15 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 359.

9 William A. Harris, interview by Martin Blumenson, 18 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 359.

10 Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361.

11 Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 360.

12 Blumenson, "The Rangers at Hwachon Dam: An Operation in Frustration," *Army* December 1967, 48.

13 Blumenson, "The Rangers at Hwachon Dam: An Operation in Frustration," *Army* December 1967, 49.

14 John S. Warren, interview by Martin Blumenson, 13 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361.

15 William V. Goolsby, interview by Martin Blumenson, 11 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361.

16 Dorsey B. Anderson, interview by Martin Blumenson, 13 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office classified Files, fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361.

17 William A. Harris, interview by Martin Blumenson, 18 April 1951, Hongchon, Korea, 3rd Historical Detachment After Action report, Hwachon Dam, USASOC History Office classified Files, fort Bragg, NC; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951*, 361.

18 James A. Field, Jr., *History of the United States Naval Operations: Korea* (Washington DC: Department of the Navy, 1962), XX.

"Travel Light and Freeze at Night"

The 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) in Korea

by Troy J. Sacquety

The 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was activated on 20 November 1950 at Fort Benning, Georgia, but its beginnings started earlier.[1] It was organized under TO&E 7-87 dated 17 October 1950, and on 17 November, the Infantry Center set its manpower authorization at 5 officers and 107 enlisted men.[2] It, like the 6th, 7th, and 8th Ranger Companies, was in the second group trained at the Ranger Training Center by 3rd Ranger Company instructors. By then, the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Ranger Companies were in or enroute to Korea.

Most of the men came from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC, while others were recruited into the company from units at Forts Campbell, Benning, or the Ranger Training Center.[3] Captain (CPT) John C. "Nails" Scagnelli, a former enlisted soldier who received a commission in WWII and postwar served in the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, was the company commander.[4] The description of CPT Scagnelli provided by his company executive officer, First Lieutenant (1LT) Joseph R. Ulatoski, set the tone in the unit: "His heart was always with the enlisted [men]. He was soft on formal discipline. The men loved him but he regarded officers as necessary appendages and this quickly drove most of them to total frustration."[5] These two factors determined CPT Scagnelli's approach to the six weeks of Ranger unit training conducted at Fort Benning.



CPT John C. Scagnelli, Commander of the 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne), in Korea, 1951.

> *"His [Scagnelli] heart was always with the enlisted [men]. He was soft on formal discipline. The men loved him but he regarded officers as necessary appendages and this quickly drove most of them to total frustration."*
>
> — 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski

According to LT Ulatoski, the Ranger training was very much *ad hoc.* The program looked good on paper. Physical training and field work were emphasized as was the ability to force march and immediately react to enemy encounters. Everything was done as a company; there were no individual standards involved. It was a group effort. According to CPT Scagnelli's method, you brought your people along with you. If somebody fell out, you got them up, and brought them along. The threat of being kicked out of the 5th Ranger Company was usually sufficient disciplinary motivation. The tough training endured by the group bonded the Rangers, especially the enlisted men in the hardscrabble outfit. "We had tremendous esprit in the company. It was not an unhappy company by any means," recalled Ulatoski.[6]

The second group of Ranger companies received training not afforded to the first. Cadre visits to Korea and combat reports prompted the Department of Army to send the second cohort of Ranger companies to cold weather and mountain warfare training at Camp Carson, Colorado, before shipping them to the war zone. During winter warfare training the 5th Rangers sought to create a unit identity to separate themselves from the other Ranger companies at Fort Carson.

Since most of the young Rangers were not combat veterans, the direction taken was towards distinguishing physical signs much like the Eighth U.S. Army Rangers getting Mohawk haircuts. Gold earrings were a short-lived fad to which "CPT Scagnelli turned a



The 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) at Fort Benning, Georgia, 1950/51.



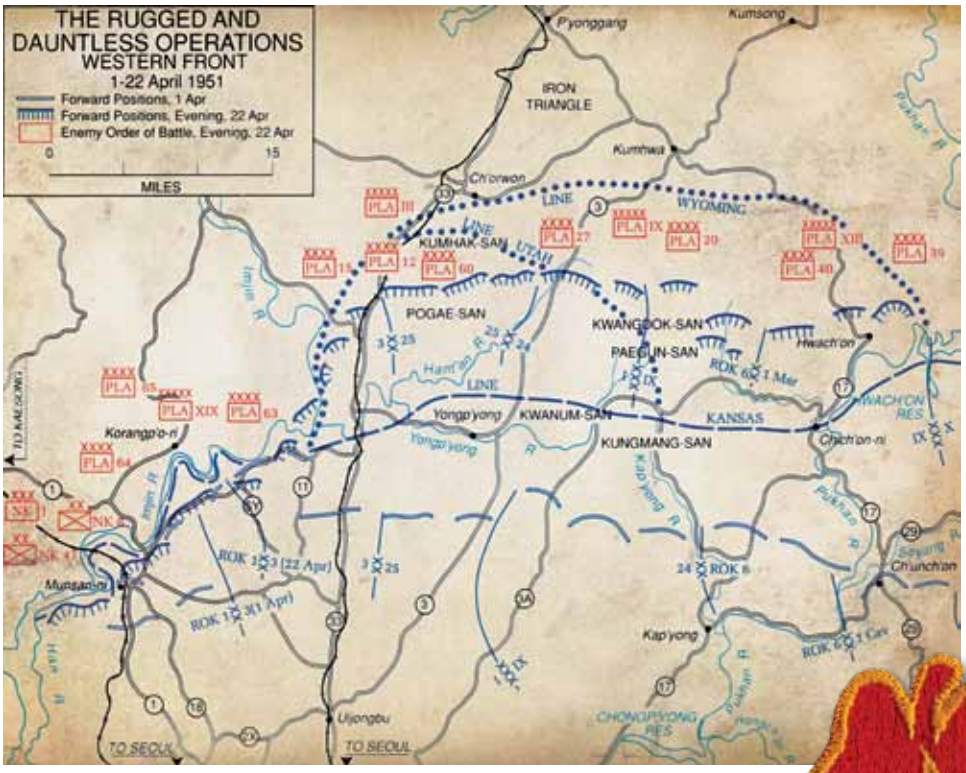
Rangers Timothy "Chief" Ontayabbi, James F. Donnelly, Nicholas R. Gallo, and John G. "Corky" Wray train at Camp Carson, Colorado in early 1951.



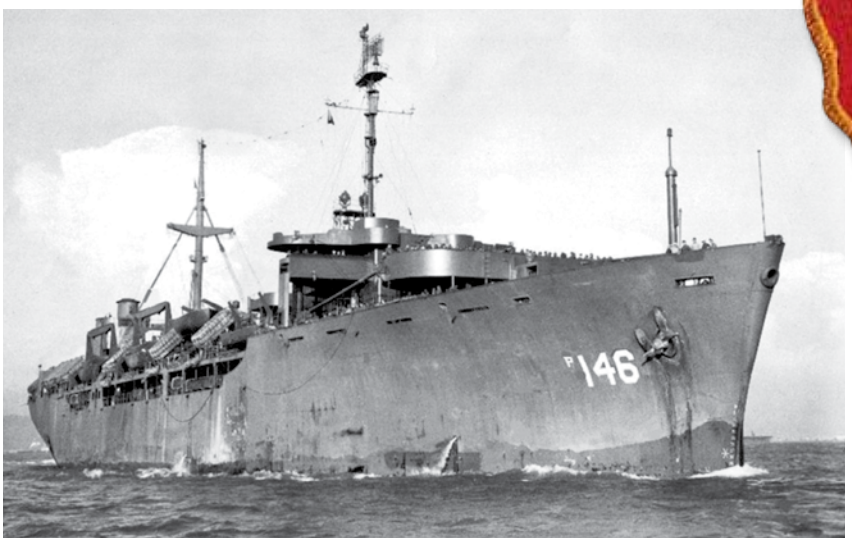
As depicted in this drawing, the 5th Rangers, led by CPT Scagnelli, earned quite a "reputation" as "hard chargers" with local bartenders of Colorado Springs.

blind eye." His attitude was, "If the troops wanted to do it, if it made them feel good, they could do it," stated LT Ulatoski. "We had a bad reputation there. 'Scag' led the hell raising in Colorado Springs and Denver and the troops very willingly followed. Finally, it got to the point where the Camp Commander restricted the company to the barracks. There were just too many fights and problems. The WWII veteran's response was: 'We're going to war. Let's enjoy ourselves.'"[7] After four weeks, the Camp Carson officers and the Colorado Springs and Denver city fathers were glad to see the 5th Rangers leave for Camp Stoneman, California.

At Camp Stoneman, where other units and personnel were normally quarantined before heading to Korea, the Ranger companies cut their troops loose. Most headed to San Francisco. After several days of carousing in San Francisco, the 5th Rangers joined the 3rd and 8th Ranger Companies on 5 March 1951 to board the USS *General W. F. Hase* (AP-146) for Korea. While at sea, in addition to physical and weapons training, CPT Scagnelli assembled the Company on the fantail. He emphatically read the Company's delinquency reports aloud before tossing them overboard.[8] Nineteen days later, the Ranger



Area of 25th Division advance until 21 April 1951.



The 5th Ranger Company, along with the 3rd and 8th Ranger Companies sailed to Korea on the USS *General W. F. Hase.*

Companies disembarked at Pusan to await transport to Inch'on. The three Ranger units arrived at Inch'on on 31 March 1951 after a three-day LST (Landing Ship, Tank) voyage. There, the 3rd, 5th, and 8th Rangers went their separate ways.

The 5th Rangers, slated for attachment to the 25th Infantry Division (ID), were trucked through Seoul. The South Korean capital had only recently been liberated for a second time by United Nations forces. The signs of combat were everywhere in the city. Despite this, Private First Class (PFC) James W. Deery recalled, "I kept looking at the truck drivers and soldiers walking alongside the road as artillery boomed in the distance. Everyone seemed so nonchalant."[9] Alongside an airstrip in the 25th ID rear area, the 5th Rangers unloaded. They were informed that they were replacing the recently deactivated Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) Ranger Company (8213th Army Unit).[10] Many assumed that the stateside-formed Ranger Infantry (Airborne) companies had caused the demise of the in-theater assets created early in the war.[11]

CPT Scagnelli and the 5th Rangers did not get a warm welcome from the 25th ID staff. LT Ulatoski recalled: "We never felt like a part of the division; we were always just attached. We did not feel welcome. Several of the Division's staff officers admitted that they did not know what to do with us. Even transportation had to be borrowed when we moved because the TO&E did not provide enough vehicles to move the troops and their many and varied types of weapons and equipment. Even then, it was reluctantly provided."[12]



25th Infantry Division SSI

Once committed, the 5th Company conducted fairly extensive but routine patrolling in front of the 27th Infantry Regiment advance to seize Line KANSAS (Operation RUGGED). This led to night ambushes of Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) mine-laying teams.[13] By 9 April 1951 when Line KANSAS was secured, EUSA was already planning to continue pushing north.

Operation DAUNTLESS was to advance the UN lines twenty miles farther north across the 38th Parallel to first, Line UTAH, and then Line WYOMING. This UN offensive was aimed at Communist strongholds in the notorious "Iron Triangle." Before the 25th ID was to launch its attack, the 5th Ranger Company had to seize Hill 383, key terrain overlooking the line of departure (LD). This action led to the 5th Ranger Company's first major fight.

LT Ulatoski described the mission: "The 25th was heading north towards the 'Iron Triangle' area. It was going to be a division attack. But, there was a series of hills a couple of miles north of the front line, right at a knuckle of the [Hant'an] River, which dominated the crossing sites. They [the 25th Division G-3] felt that if the 5th could get up there and hold those hills, the division's river crossing would be relatively unhindered and expedited. The company's mission was to seize Hill 383 at night because the division was due to jump off early

the next morning."[14] There was no time to reconnoiter an approach route and current intelligence on CCF dispositions was lacking.

After leaders were briefed and pre-combat equipment checks completed, the Ranger force passed through the 24th Infantry Regiment front line to penetrate deep into enemy-held territory to seize Hill 383. They were to be relieved the next day, 11 April 1951, by the 24th Infantry Regiment. After eight hours of night movement that included crossing the Hant'an River, the 5th Rangers reached the base of Hill 383 at dawn. Any element of surprise was gone. While discipline in garrison was not CPT Scagnelli's concern, the intrepid WWII veteran was a natural combat leader, especially in tough situations. As his men rested CPT Scagnelli called for artillery preparatory fires before attacking at 1000 hours. The 3rd Platoon led the Ranger Company assault up the thousand-foot hill. The 5th encountered little resistance until they reached the top.[15]

There they suddenly found overwhelming numbers of swarming Communist Chinese soldiers. CPT Scagnelli ordered an immediate withdrawal off the hilltop so that he could bring in napalm. After the air strikes, the 3rd Platoon charged back up to engage the Chinese defenders in close combat. Confusion reigned among the enemy force. One Communist soldier forgot to pull the safety pin before throwing his grenade. It ricocheted off the head of 1LT Mack McGinnis before falling between him and Sergeant (SGT) Robert A. Dulaney.[16] After the 5th Rangers captured the hill, CPT Scagnelli set up a defensive perimeter with 2nd Platoon on the east, 3rd Platoon on the north, and 1st Platoon on the west. Forgetting that the Chinese were more familiar with the terrain, the Ranger Company rear was left unguarded because it was a "sheer drop to the Hant'an River hundreds of meters below."[17]

Unbeknownst to the Rangers occupying Hill 383, the 24th Regiment kick-off attack had not gone well; relief on 11 April was not going to happen. The American 25th and 24th Infantry Divisions on the right flank of the U.S. I Corps zone faced two CCF armies, the *26th* and *40th*.[18] The 105-man 5th Ranger Company had penetrated deep into enemy territory and was now all alone. Because the conventional forces could not relieve the Rangers, extremely large numbers of Chinese soldiers would arrive at night to "greet" the small Company.



24th Infantry Regiment DUI

The anticipated Chinese ground attack was preceded by a twenty-minute mortar barrage that began at 2000 hours. In between concentrations, the 5th Rangers listened to Chinese commanders issuing orders. Two red flares signaled the lifting of indirect fire and bugles sounded to start a massive ground attack from three sides. In the resulting close quarter bayonet fighting, a Ranger remembered that that he "could smell the garlic" on the Chinese soldiers' breath because they were that close.[19] After fighting off successive waves of CCF attacks for three hours, it became obvious that the Ranger company (half the size of a conventional infantry company) could not hold out indefinitely without reinforcement or more ammunition. Under heavy Chinese pressure, CPT Scagnelli decided to make a break south over the cliff to their immediate rear. Two badly wounded Rangers, SGT William Kirshfield, Jr. and Corporal (CPL) Walter J. Maziarz, heroically volunteered to cover the night withdrawal under pressure.[20]



Example of a Marine air-observer team guiding a USMC F46 Corsair in for a strike on an enemy-held hill. The Corsair pilots were highly praised by Army & Marines for precision strikes on targets and their extremely close support of forward units. *(U.S. Marine Corps photo.)*

The two flank platoons, the 1st and 3rd, withdrew as the 2nd Platoon in the center provided covering fire. Under intense, continuous pressure from the Chinese, control was lost when CPT Scagnelli gave the order to "escape and evade." Soon, it was every man for himself. The rendezvous site for assembly was the Hant'an River crossing site. One small group of Rangers found a small trail down the cliff and began to run, barreling into a squad of Chinese soldiers working their way up the hill. The Chinese were so surprised that no one managed to fire at the Rangers until they had raced out of range. When a large group of Rangers had collected on the far bank of the Hant'an, CPT Scagnelli led them south to the forward positions of the 24th Infantry.[21]

5th Company Rangers would trickle back into friendly lines for the next several days. MSG Garland J. McAbee, Technical Sergeant E. G. Wofford, and another 2nd Platoon Ranger, unable to find a clear route down in the dark, holed up in a cave to avoid the Chinese. At

dawn the trio managed to slip across the Hant'an to cross several miles of enemy territory before attempting the harrowing entry through allied lines.[22] Others did not have it so "easy." Private (PVT) Jess S. Moore managed to capture a Chinese Thompson sub-machinegun but was wounded in the retreat. He tried to reach safety, but fell into a hole. The captured weapon hit him on the head, "knocking him silly. When he regained his feet he went the wrong way and was shot twice, but made it across the river before passing out." PVT Jack J. Cambra recalled that "I spoke with someone who carried Moore to an aid station and marveled that Jess had his first aid dressing on the knot on his head but was bleeding profusely from his bullet wounds . . . he eventually returned to the Company, although about twenty pounds lighter."[23]

So, it was no surprise to several soldiers of the 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Division, huddled over a fire at night heating rations and boiling water that an unarmed Chinese soldier and two Rangers emerged from the darkness. They joined the group and began warming their hands too. One 24th Infantryman quipped, "Man, them Ranger boys have been coming through our position all night. Now two more come through and they have Joe [POW] with them." Having been pushed off Hill 383 after several long hours of fierce fighting and evading the enemy for most of a day and night, the Rangers felt little ill will towards their prisoner. In fact, according to Ranger John "Jack" Cambra, the prisoner was taken by Bernard "Ben" E. Murdock, who, when taking the POW across the river, slipped on a moss-covered rock. "The prisoner grabbed Ben's rifle and dragged him upright and returned his rifle. Ben motioned for him to return to his fellow soldiers, but he wasn't having any. For him, the war was over."[24]

After they had warmed themselves sufficiently, the two Rangers and the 24th Infantrymen shared food and cigarettes with the Chinese POW before turning him over for interrogation. Then, the Rangers went in search of their unit.[25] It was just another day in combat with many more to follow. In its first major engagement, Hill 383, the 5th Ranger Company had suffered two killed, eight wounded, and had three missing in action.[26] The bodies of Rangers Kirshfield and Maziarz were later recovered by 25th ID soldiers when the hill was retaken a few days later.



27th Infantry Regiment DUI

The 5th Rangers might have gotten a larger role in the offensive. With the UN forces pushing north, according to the Ranger veterans, rumors arose that they would conduct an airborne insertion. According to them, the I Corps staff wanted to use the unique capabilities of the Airborne Ranger Infantry companies. Since I Corps had the second cadre of Ranger Companies, the 3rd, 5th, and 8th, it looked to secure drop aircraft and hastily drew up plans to organize and insert this provisional Ranger Battalion by parachute at a road junction near Ch'orwon. In that way, the combined Ranger force would occupy positions that would block several enemy Main Supply Routes. Not only would this hamper enemy logistics, but would also trap any Communist forces that tried to retreat along that route. According to the Ranger veterans, the proposed airborne operation was aborted. Instead, the Rangers, after a number of patrols, were assigned to fill in a gap in the front lines between the 24th and 27th Regiments. But this was fortuitous for the 5th Rangers. On the very morning that the jump was to take place, the Chinese began their Spring Offensive.[27] Since major Chinese forces came through the targeted crossroads, the Rangers would have been overwhelmed.

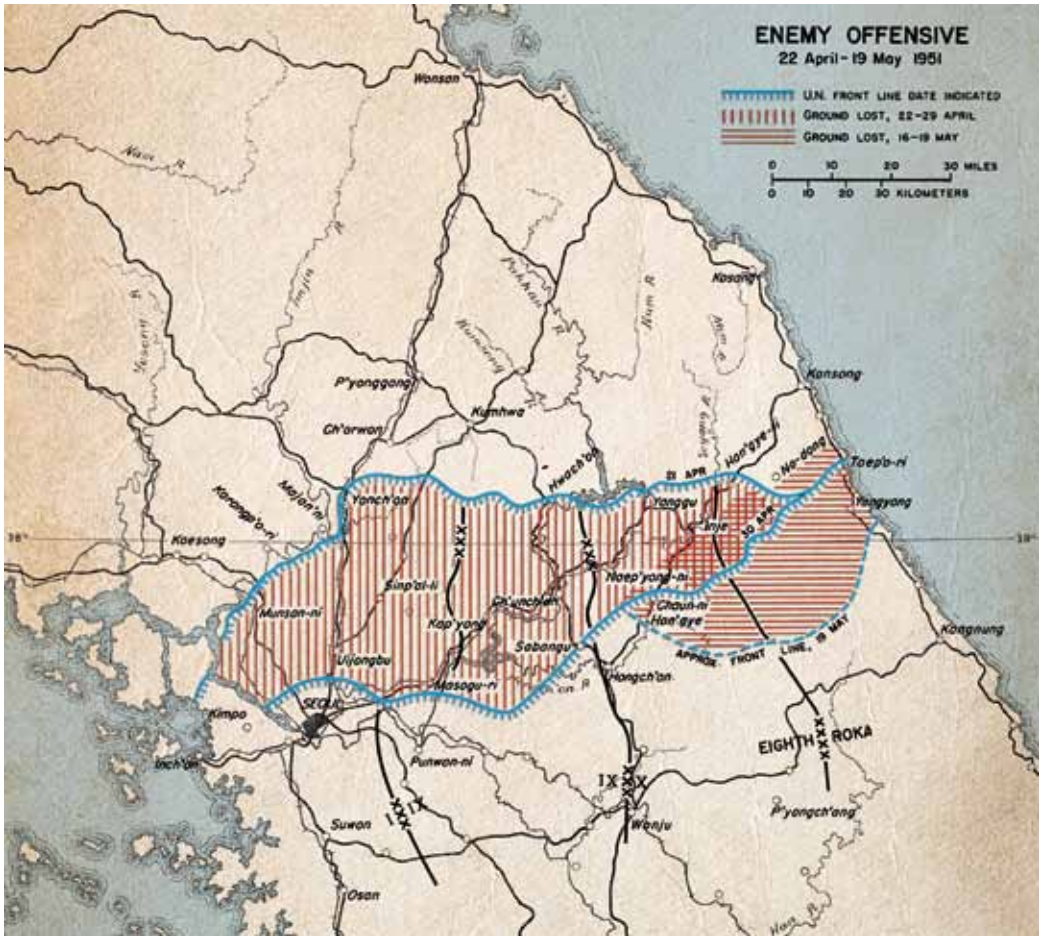
The Chinese Spring Offensive again caught the UN forces by surprise and forced them to withdraw. As the 25th ID retreated south the 5th Rangers walked past Hill 383. Operation DAUNTLESS was in shambles.[28] During the retreat the 5th Ranger Company, operating with a 25th Reconnaissance element, fought rear guard actions during the day. They would hold positions, mostly along the available roads, until the Chinese came abreast of them in the overlooking hills. After the inevitable firefight, the rear guard would pull back to the next designated location. At the end of each day, the 5th would then go into reserve behind line infantry battalions, usually those of the 27th Infantry Regiment, and the drill would be repeated the next day.



Rangers of the 1st Platoon hold a makeshift guidon in Korea, 1951. Many of the Rangers wear the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the 25th Infantry Division, surmounted by a Ranger scroll.



SGT William Kirshfield, Jr., wounded on Hill 383, volunteered along with CPL Walter J. Maziarz to stay and cover the company's retreat. Both were killed in action. In 2000, Kirschfield was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame.



Enemy gains in the Chinese Spring Offensive.



Soldiers of the 25th Division just south of Ch'orwon during the Chinese Spring Offensive, 23 April 1951.

After several days of retreating a couple of miles at a time, the 25th ID pulled back nearly twenty miles on the assumption that the UN retreat was so rapid that it would foil the ability of the Chinese to quickly mount a major attack. It was a forgivable, but incorrect conjecture. The 5th Rangers had the uncomfortable luxury of riding on tanks before being directed to bivouac near the Command Post (CP) of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment. At 1930 hours reports came into the CP of a heavy buildup of enemy forces to the front of the American lines. The Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion ordered CPT Scagnelli to send a Ranger platoon to fill the gap between the 3rd Platoon of G Company and F Company.[29] The 3rd Platoon, 5th Rangers went to the front line with little guidance other than "go link up with G Company and see what you can do!"[30] Meanwhile, the rest of the 5th Ranger Company was ordered to fill gaps elsewhere in the line. The Chinese soon commenced to attack in force.

They attacked in human waves and hit right at the junction of two companies of the 27th. The Americans fired massive amounts of artillery but to no avail. The Chinese kept coming and "walked right over their dead." In places the bodies were four to five feet high.[31] G Company soon dissolved under the pressure. David Hackworth described the attack in his book *About Face*: "Suddenly there was no shooting in the valley . . . Then [there] was a hum-a drone-as the Chinese yelled in unison and steamrolled through the 1st and 2nd platoon. They smashed the position in half, creating a gap of 500 or 600 yards. The floodgate was open and the enemy was pouring though . . . mortars were firing; we could see the sparks as they left the tubes. Then the flood hit them-no more mortar section."[32] Some of the Chinese managed to penetrate as far as a mile behind the lines before 25th Division reserves contained them.[33]

While this was happening, the Rangers moved to set up a blocking position to the rear of G Company in order to intercept stragglers. It proved exceedingly difficult as Americans and Chinese soldiers were intermingled. As ammunition began to get low, the Rangers grabbed survivors who yelled "We're G Company, Don't Shoot!" and integrated them into the defensive position. But, the Rangers were not without their difficulties.

On having to shift their position, the commander of the Ranger's 1st Platoon, 220-pound LT Frederick M. Lang, was hit in both legs and incapacitated. Rather than restrict the movement of the platoon, he ordered SGT Albert A. Romagnoli to put him down when he picked up the wounded Lieutenant. When Romagnoli refused the order, LT Lang "threw his torso around to make it impossible for Romagnoli to carry him."[34] Meanwhile, at the CP and elsewhere, the 25th Division quickly recovered from the attack and sealed off the penetration.

Daybreak caught the Chinese in the open and F-51 Mustangs strafed the area at will. Once the main enemy force was cleared, the 5th Rangers were ordered to mop up the area of any stragglers. In so doing, they found the body of LT Lang. In front of him lay the bodies of several Chinese whom he had killed before being bayoneted.[35] The 25th Division then retreated one last time to Line GOLDEN, just above Seoul.

> *"[Task Force HAMILTON] "was to go north until it hit something substantial and could not go any farther."*
>
> *— 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski*

The retreat in the face of the CCF Spring Offensive marked the beginning of the Ranger companies being used in roles for which they were not intended. The capability of a Ranger company to penetrate deep behind enemy lines in order to disrupt supply and communications had been nullified by what was quickly becoming a static stage of the war. The dilemma facing the 25th ID G-3 (Operations) was how to employ the 5th Ranger Company effectively in this static environment. Hence, after the attack on Hill 383, the Rangers were increasingly misused as they were employed as conventional line infantry and assigned to special task forces, to block penetrations in the front lines, or to cover withdrawals. Although these were missions for which the Rangers were not designed, they did them well.

> *"Progress became much slower as the engineers now had to screen the road for mines."*
>
> *— 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski*

Once behind Line GOLDEN things were quiet for a few days. Having driven the UN forces south of the 38th Parallel again, the CCF broke contact all across the front and pulled back to establish well-fortified defensive lines. The 25th Division then started sending out patrols to reestablish contact, for which they again called upon the 5th Rangers. One such instance was when the Rangers were ordered to participate in Task Force HAMILTON, commanded by Major W. T. Hamilton of the 89th Medium Tank Battalion (MTB).[36]

> *"Still, we fought our way to the top of the hill. Then, all hell broke loose. Chinese were coming out of holes in top of the hill and more were charging up the back of the hill. It was sheer pandemonium as hand to hand fighting broke out."*
>
> *— 1LT Joseph R. Ulatoski*

The Task Force (TF) was comprised of Company A, 79th MTB, the reconnaissance and an assault gun platoon from the 89th MTB, the 5th Ranger Company, an artillery Forward Observer (FO) team, a U.S. Air Force tactical air control party (TACP), a medical detachment, and a 65th Engineer Battalion mine-clearing detachment.[37] They were to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force forward of the 25th ID lines to locate the enemy's main line of resistance (MLR). Ulatoski recalled that CPT Scagnelli told him that Task Force HAMILTON "was to go north until it hit something substantial and could not go any farther."[38] That place would be a small valley near Kimo-ri.

"From the start we were road bound. As we headed north, the valley narrowed. The tanks were in the lead. As the valley continued to narrow, and the road began to rise towards a range of low hills to the front, one of the tanks hit a mine. Then, the engineers went to work. Shortly thereafter another tank hit a mine. Progress became much slower as the engineers now had to screen the road for mines. The Rangers dismounted to provide security for the engineers. As progress was made, the road ahead crossed over a saddle with hill masses on either side. As we approached the saddle, it became obvious that the hills on either side dominated the road and would be a good place for a fight or ambush. The aircraft overhead reported there were signs of digging on the hills but no sign of enemy activity," said Ulatoski.[39] CPT Scagnelli directed the 2nd Platoon, led by recently commissioned Second Lieutenant (2LT) Garland J. McAbee [an 82nd Airborne Division WWII veteran] to the top of the hill on the left (west).[40] The 3rd Platoon, commanded by 1LT Ulatoski, was to go to the top of the hill on the right (east). The 1st Platoon would provide security for the tanks which were nestled closely against the base of the hill on the right (east). But, unbeknownst to the Americans, the hills were well-defended by the enemy.

The 3rd Platoon quickly encountered resistance as they began to climb their hill on the right. Chinese soldiers engaged them from well-camouflaged positions dug into the hills. At this point, communication with the aircraft overhead was lost and the Rangers had little idea of what was in front of them. Ulatoski recalled, "Still, we fought our way to the top of the hill. Then, all hell broke loose. People started coming out of hidden tunnels behind us as others flooded onto the top of the hill. I lost radio communications within the platoon and with the company. Everything failed at that point. Chinese were coming out of holes on top of the hill and more were charging up the back of the hill. It was sheer pandemonium as hand to hand fighting broke out." Then, the Chinese began mortaring the hilltop where their troops were engaging the 3rd Platoon.[41]

In the midst of the chaos, LT Ulatoski spotted four Chinese soldiers with a machinegun in a prepared position getting ready to engage the Rangers. Just then, a mortar round exploded nearby, knocking Ulatoski to the ground. It happened at the very moment that he pulled the safety pin from a hand grenade prior to throwing it at the enemy machinegun. He was wounded and momentarily unconscious. "Private First Class (PFC) John K. Hammond saw the grenade in my hand as I lay on the ground. As I started to regain consciousness I remember

Brigadier General Joseph R. Ulatoski



Joseph R. Ulatoski was born in Stamford, Connecticut on 2 June 1927. Enlisting in the U.S. Army Infantry at the age of seventeen in March 1945, he graduated with his class at Stamford High School in June. Too late to see combat in WWII, he graduated from Officer Candidate School in March 1946, and was assigned to occupation duty in Korea with the 44th Military Government Company, 96th Military Government Group. This was followed by an assignment to the G-2 (Intelligence) of the 6th Infantry Division in the Pohang dong area to counter Communist infiltrators from the north. This led to working with XXIV Corps as an agent handler for intelligence operations into North Korea. Returning to the United States in 1948, he served at Ford Ord, California where he received a Regular Army commission. First Lieutenant Ulatoski then volunteered for airborne school, and after graduation, was assigned to the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. In 1950, Ulatoski volunteered for Ranger training at Fort Benning, Georgia, serving concurrently as the Executive Officer and rifle platoon leader in the 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) until being seriously wounded on 14 May 1951.

By the time 1LT Ulatoski was released from the hospital in 1951, he knew the Ranger companies were being deactivated. Volunteering once more, he was assigned to the 8086th Miscellaneous Group, the Eighth U.S. Army Unit (AU) charged with organizing anti-Communist partisan/guerrilla activity. On 10 December 1951, the 8086th AU was absorbed into the 8240th AU, which later became the United Nations Partisan Forces, Korea (UNPFK), a legacy unit of today's U.S. Army Special Forces. Ulatoski served as the senior advisor/commander of Task Force KIRKLAND Forward, operating off the east coast of North Korea until June 1952.

Having already served in three separate U.S. Army special operations units (Military Government—today's Civil Affairs, Rangers, and the 8086/8240th AUs), Ulatoski studied Russian in the Army Foreign Area Specialist Training (FAST) Program. This curriculum included attendance at the Defense Language School, a year of Russian studies at Columbia University, and two years at the Army's Foreign Institute in Germany. At the height of the Cold War, his education and language skills led to an assignment as the Assistant U.S. Army Attaché to the Soviet Union from 1957-1959. That was followed by tours with the 1st Battle Group, 10th Infantry Regiment at Fort Ord, California and at the U.S. Army Special Warfare School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where he served from 1961-1962 on the Tactics Committee of the Counterinsurgency Department. He then attended Command and General Staff College in 1962-1963 and subsequently earned a Bachelor of General Education degree in 1964 from Omaha University, now the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Several tours in Vietnam followed. These included duty as the operations advisor to the Vietnamese Army II Corps (1964-1965), followed by command of the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division (1967). After attending the Army War College in 1967-1968, Ulatoski returned to Vietnam, assuming command of the 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (1970). When the 25th ID was alerted to return to Hawaii, the decision was made to retain the 2nd Brigade in Vietnam as an independent unit. Thus, Ulatoski had the opportunity to command a separate 6,000-man reinforced brigade. These combat command tours were interspersed with staff positions at various high-level headquarters including the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (CINCPAC), today's USPACOM, and the Office of the Undersecretary of the Army.

From 1971 to 1973, Ulatoski served under the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations as Deputy Chief of Army War Plans and as Executive Officer for the Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense. Promoted to Brigadier General (BG) in 1974, he commanded the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) in Thailand, which was responsible for accounting for U.S. personnel missing in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, South Vietnam and North Vietnam. In 1975, Ulatoski became the Assistant Division Commander of the 8th Infantry Division in Mainz, Germany. For his final assignment, BG Ulatoski was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence for the U.S. Army Forces Command at Fort McPherson, Georgia. Ulatoski retired from the Army in 1977, and subsequently had a very successful business career. His U.S. decorations include the Combat Infantryman's Badge (2nd award), Master Parachutist Badge, Distinguished Service Medal (2), Legion of Merit (4), Bronze Star (4 awards, 2 with V device), Army Meritorious Service Award, Air Medal (22), Joint Service Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Purple Heart (2), World War II Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal, Korean Service Medal (with 5 battle stars), Vietnam War Service Medal (with 6 battle stars), and the Ranger Tab.[1]

Endnotes

1 Joseph R. Ulatoski-A Personal Summary, copy provided by BG Joseph Ulatoski to the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.



Garland J. McAbee, a WWII 82nd Airborne Division veteran, joined the Rangers as an enlisted man but received a battlefield commission.



Leaflets, such as these produced by the 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, encouraged Communist soldiers to surrender to UN forces. Such leaflets may have played a role in the decision of the Chinese soldiers who used 1LT Ulatoski as a "safe conduct pass" to become prisoners of war.

hearing him screaming, 'The grenade, Lieutenant! The grenade, Lieutenant!' Then, he threw himself down on top of me and locked my fingers around the grenade spoon. Hammond worked it free and knocked out the machinegun nest, saving us and other Rangers nearby," remembered Ulatoski.

"As I came to my senses, I realized that we were on the verge of being overrun. Our only alternative was to pull back to a point where we would be covered by tank fire. At that point the Chinese were attacking the platoon from all directions and all organized resistance was rapidly dissolving. I gave the order for everybody to get off the hill. As far as I knew at that point there were only three of us left on the hill. I told a BAR man to drop back and give us covering fire. He got hit in both arms but he jumped up and headed down the hill. The platoon sergeant Master Sergeant, Owen L. Claycomb, was hit in the head and killed. Then, when I tried to jump up to follow the others, my left leg gave out under me and I fell forward. Somehow I managed to keep getting up and throwing myself forward down the hill using my one good leg until I crashed into a ravine. It was kind of an out-of-body experience until I slammed into a tree. Right in front of the tree were two Chinese soldiers firing down the hill. They turned, reacting to the noise, and there I was. I had my .45 and knife, [and was] bleeding like a stuck pig. Instead of shooting me, they dropped their weapons and the two grabbed me under the arms and began dragging me down the hill. All they had to do was reach up and take my .45 and knife but they carried me to safety to become prisoners of war," recalled the seriously wounded lieutenant. "But, the scariest thing was being in a stretcher outside one of the bubble helicopters. They strap you in and you can't move. That terminated my service with the 5th Ranger Company."[42]

The 2nd Platoon led by LT Garland J. McAbee encountered almost the same situation as the 3rd Platoon. They too came under intense fire from camouflaged positions almost immediately after launching their attack, but were able to fight their way out as an organized unit. "The 5th Rangers suffered heavy casualties in its fight against a reinforced dug-in battalion. The moral of the story is: Never attack an enemy main line of resistance with an understrength company," said Ulatoski. [43] The May 1951 Command Report for the 5th Rangers had twenty-eight wounded, three killed, and one missing. MSG Donald H. White, acting 1st Platoon leader, was last seen charging the Chinese with a machete.[44]

It was serendipity that a month earlier, after two Rangers brought a Chinese POW back from Hill 383, that two Chinese soldiers manhandled the seriously wounded 1LT Ulatoski to safety in order to surrender. Despite heavy losses when employed against well-defended enemy lines like regular infantry, the 25th ID continued to throw the 5th Rangers "into the breach." This misuse caused the company heavy casualties.

One such casualty was CPL Walter Eckhardt, a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) man in the 1st Platoon. He was wounded on 4 June 1951 during the attack on "Objective SUGAR" (Hill 722) in support of the 27th Infantry Regiment. While engaged in close combat with Chinese troops, Eckhardt knelt down to clear his BAR. I heard "a loud crack, much like the noise when slamming a door" as something jarred me. I was surprised to see my BAR lying on the ground. As I (instinctively) reached for it with my right hand, I was even more surprised not to see my hand grasp the barrel to recover the weapon. Then, I looked down and saw my right arm from the biceps down, flopping around like a chicken with its head



After Korea, CPT Scagnelli joined the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He is seen here on the right along with with 10th SFG commander Colonel Ekman (L) and CPT Marshall (M), in Bad Toelz, Germany in 1956. Scagnelli retired from Special Forces as a Major.



Many of the 5th Rangers, like CPT Scagnelli, joined the 187th Regimental Combat Team after the disbanding of the Ranger companies in Korea on 1 August 1951.



187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team SSI

cut off."[45] The Ranger corporal told his assistant gunner to take the BAR as he clasped the badly wounded arm close to his chest. The Company medic put a tourniquet on his arm to stop the bleeding and made a sling. Eckhardt made his way down the hill to the 27th Infantry aid station where he was quickly evacuated to a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) covered in blood from "his shoulder to his boots."[46] On that day, in addition to Eckhardt, the company suffered two killed and thirty one wounded.[47] Included among the wounded were CPT Scagnelli and 2LT McAbee. It was just another day in the Rangers.

Even though by now, the Rangers were severely understrength, the unit continued to perform the kind of missions assigned to regular infantry line companies (twice the size). From 5 June until 23 June, the 5th Rangers conducted routine reconnaissance patrols, or served to maintain contact with friendly units when there were gaps in the line. However, it was clear that the 5th needed to refit. From 24 June until 16 July 1951, the Rangers went into 25th Division reserve to focus on training, rehabilitation, and replacing their losses. Then, on 17 July, the Ranger company received its last mission; to secure positions, including a ferry site, along the Imjin River. But the mission was short lived. On 28 July, the company was pulled back into 25th Division reserve. There, like the other Ranger Infantry (Airborne) companies in Korea it was disbanded on 1 August. Most of its personnel were transferred to the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. A few Rangers like 1LT Ulatoski, volunteered and served in other Special Operations units in Korea: the 8086th Miscellaneous Group, the 8240th Army Unit and the Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK). Others, like Scagnelli, John J. "Jack" Cambra, John H. Hale, Loner B. Westmoreland, and Bernard E. Murdock later joined Special Forces.[48]

Some of its veterans still have doubts about the use of the Ranger companies in Korea. Ulatoski summed up his frustration: "One of the fallacies of the Rangers was that you were supposed to be set up in the rear, ready to go in and do (special) missions, and you would be provided everything that you needed to do those missions. You had the trained personnel, the weapons, but insofar as the other gear needed (and supporting fires), no."[49] But, the Ranger Companies in the Korean War did have an impact that remains to this day.



As ARSOF legacy units, the Ranger Companies of the Korean War have a memorial stone in place at the USASOC Memorial Plaza, Fort Bragg, NC.

Subsequently, the curriculum used to train Ranger Infantry (Airborne) Companies by the Ranger Training Center, U.S. Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA, provided the basis for training individual soldiers, junior officers and non-commissioned officers (NCO), in small unit leadership and tactics. The Ranger Department produces some of the finest small unit leaders in the Army thus spreading those skills throughout its combat units. While misused to a great extent in Korea, the Ranger companies did more with less, and performed better than most line infantry companies. They are a strong link in the lineage of the 75th Ranger Regiment today.

Thank you: I wish to thank the following for providing help with this article: Ms. Doris C. Baker, MSG (R) Jack Cambra, MAJ (R) Caesar J. Civitella, Mr. Donald Kaufman, Ms. Rosie Scagnelli, and BG (R) Joseph R. Ulatoski. A special thanks go to COL (R) Walter Eckhart for his efforts at documenting the 5th Company history and providing that material to the USASOC History Office.

Troy J. Sacquety earned an MA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and his PhD in Military History from Texas A&M University. Prior to joining the USASOC History Office staff he worked several years for the Central Intelligence Agency. Current research interests include Army and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) special operations during World War II, and Special Operations units in Vietnam.

Endnotes

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2 COL (ret) Walter Eckhardt, email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 1 August 20010, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

3 Eckhardt, email. The unit was overstrength by design at its formation. It originally had 7 officers and 148 enlisted men. Twelve men did not complete the training program and were sent to the 82nd Airborne Division. Seventeen Rangers transferred to the 7th Ranger Company on 19 January 1951.

4 Scagnelli served in Panama in 1940 in the 33rd Infantry Regiment, then transferred to the 661st Ordnance Company Aviation (Pursuit) in 1941 (also in Panama). He then served in Flora, Mississippi with the 833rd Ordnance Base Depot Company in 1943. He next landed as an infantryman at Omaha Beach in Normandy on D-Day and fought in the European Campaign. Unit Thanksgiving and Christmas Dinner menus provided by Ms. Rosie Scagnelli, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC; emails provided by Ms. Doris C. Baker, copies in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

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26 5th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) extract from 25th Division Command Report compiled by Walt Eckhardt, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

27 Ulatoski email; Eckhardt email.

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39 Ulatoski email.

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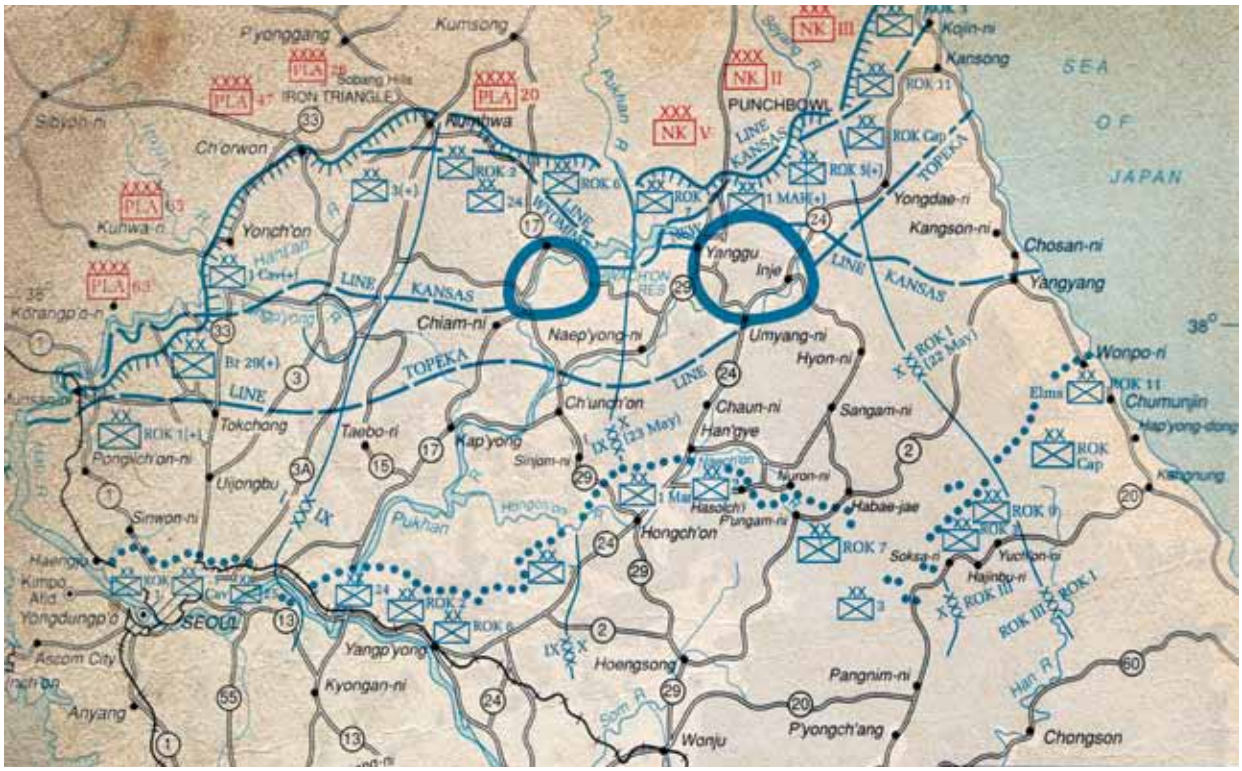
"When Men Don't Panic"

2nd Ranger Infantry Company on Hill 581

by Kenneth Finlayson

The American infantry company moved up the slope of the hill, the company commander in the lead. When the captain reached the crest, he halted his unit. More than sixty enemy bodies lay scattered around the hilltop and down its forward slope. Several U.S. soldiers sat cleaning their weapons. Others lay sleeping in foxholes. The captain spoke to the troops, questioning them on the recently concluded battle. He saluted the soldiers, then turned and addressed his company. "Look around," he said. "This is what happens to the enemy when men don't panic."[1] With that, the company passed over the top of the hill and descended to take up their defensive positions. The hill was called 581. The defenders were the 2nd Ranger Infantry Company.

Six Ranger Infantry Companies fought in the Korean War. The 2nd Ranger Company (nicknamed the "Buffaloes") was the only all-black company in what would soon be a totally integrated Army.[2] As one of the first three Ranger companies to arrive in Korea in December 1950, they were initially attached to the 7th Infantry Division (7th ID). The 2nd Rangers fought in numerous battles including at Munsan-ni, where they parachuted in with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) in March 1951. The subsequent weeks of combat and the injuries sustained in the winter weather took a toll and by April 1951, only 75 men remained from the original company strength of 122.[3] On 24 April 1951 they were detached from the 187th and re-attached to the 7th Infantry Division. For the next three weeks, the majority of the company conducted combat patrols in front of the division while a small element acted as the training cadre for the black soldiers coming to the 7th ID as replacements.



The 2nd Rangers were attached to the 7th Infantry Division (circled). The action at Hill 581 was part of the Eighth Army advance north to reestablish the Kansas Line.



The 2nd Ranger Infantry company was the only all-black Ranger company formed in 1950. At the time of the fight on Hill 581, the company was down to seventy-five effectives.



L to R Captain Warren E. Allen, Company Commander, 2nd Lieutenant Vincent Wilburn, Second Platoon leader and 1st Lieutenant James C. Queen, Executive Officer. In the absence of Captain Allen, Lieutenant Queen led the company on Hill 581. Lieutenant Wilburn acted as the company executive officer.

First Lieutenant (1LT) Albert Cliette was the Third Platoon leader for the company. Of the replacements he said, "A lot of these guys were from support units and had not gone through infantry basic training."[4] Sergeant (SGT) Cleveland Valrey was the non-commissioned officer-in-charge (NCOIC) of the new soldiers. "We did not use a formal program of instruction. We used our experience. We gave them a lot of strenuous physical training, weapons firing, hand-to-hand combat and took them on patrols."[5] Of the several hundred replacements that came through the training program, they only kept ten. The rest were dispersed throughout the division.[6] The Ranger cadre and their new replacements rejoined the rest of the 2nd Company on the Combat Outpost Line (COPL) during the second week of May.

The Rangers aggressively patrolled in front of the division, often to a depth of three miles, to determine the location and disposition of the enemy. "We ran recon patrols in the forward area," recalled 1LT Cliette. "We were north of the [Hongchon] river trying to find the Chinese and establish were the ROKs were."[7] The patrols took the Rangers onto Hill 581, the scene of the battle to come.

1LT James C. Queen, the company executive officer (XO), was leading a patrol that crossed Hill 581 when he was recalled. "We got a withdrawal order to return to the regimental area," said Queen. "We had quite a bit of small arms ammunition we didn't want to carry back. I buried it on the hill in a mortar pit figuring we would be back there at some time."[8] Queen's foresight later paid dividends.

Upon the patrol's return, the men found out that some of them were selected to go on R & R (rest and recuperation leave). Since the unit's arrival in Korea in December 1950, there had been no leave for the men. Now the company had an opportunity to send fifteen men to Japan. The 2d Company commander, Captain (CPT) Warren E. Allen,

Men of the 2nd Ranger Company moving with tanks of the 7th Infantry Division near Chachon, Korea in February 1951. The 2nd Rangers were attached to the 7th ID and the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team during their seven months in combat.





As the Rangers moved up Hill 581, an airstrike of F-51 Mustang fighters dropped napalm on slopes ahead of them. *(Illustration by Mariano Santillan)*



1LT Bernard B. Pryor leading his platoon. Pryor would be on R&R in Tokyo during the fight for Hill 581.

took lieutenants Bernard B. Pryor, James E. Freeman, Antonio Anthony and eleven enlisted men with him, leaving 1LT Queen as acting commander. Their departure reduced the company strength to three officers and sixty-five enlisted men. On 17 May the half-strength company moved on foot to the vicinity of the 31st Infantry Regiment headquarters, arriving in the early morning hours of the 18th. Here Queen received the order to assault Hill 581, a piece of key terrain in the regiment's sector.

For the attack, the 31st Regiment attached the 2nd Ranger Company to the 1st Battalion, (the "Legionnaires"). 1LT Queen acted as both the company commander and First Platoon leader. "I reorganized the company, combining First and Second platoons," said Queen. "Master Sergeant George Rankins, the First Platoon Sergeant, was in charge [of the combined platoons] with [1LT Albert] Cliette leading Third Platoon. [1LT Vincent] Wilburn acted as XO and he was back in the rear taking care of supplies and ammunition."[9] The company moved out in the early morning over the now familiar ground leading to Hill 581. A Company, 1st Battalion followed behind the Rangers.

At about 1000 hrs the 1st Battalion operations section radioed 1LT Queen to alert him of an incoming air strike against the hill. Shortly thereafter, a flight of three F-51 Mustang fighters roared over the company and dropped napalm about one third of the way up the hill.[10] The company pressed on in a column with Cliette's Third Platoon in the lead. As they neared the crest, the point element by-passed an outpost of three Chinese soldiers. The Chinese fled over the top of the hill. Private First Class (PFC) Winston Jackson, moving with the point element,



Troops of the 31st Infantry Regiment dug-in above the Hongchon River in May 1951. The 2nd Ranger Company was attached to the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry at Hill 581.

recalled, "1LT Queen called out 'before this day is over, you are going to regret passing those enemy soldiers.'"[11] The company reached the summit of the hill at noon, reported their arrival to the battalion, and started moving down the far side.

"We could see the [Hongchon] river from the top of the hill," said 1LT Albert Cliette. "In the distance it looked like enemy columns moving away from us back across the river."[12] Not all the enemy forces were leaving the battle area, however. "I remember vividly lines of Chinese soldiers marching up the hills on both sides of us," said SGT Cleveland Valrey. "I recall thinking we were headed into trouble."[13] That trouble started when the company crested the hill.

"As we started to move down the other side, we came under merciless small arms fire," said Cliette.[14] In the opening fusillade, Corporal (CPL) Ralph W. Sutton was killed and several Rangers were wounded. The infantry company from the 31st quickly moved forward to help the Rangers break contact. The Rangers pulled back to the top of the hill. The infantry moved back and occupied a small rise a few hundred yards down the slope behind the Rangers.

1LT Queen placed the small company in a circular perimeter with the composite First/Second Platoon on the left and Third Platoon on the right. He began to call for artillery fire against the advancing Chinese as the intensity of small arms fire increased. The Rangers took what cover they could among the sparse shrubs and small trees growing on the top of the hill. Some used old fighting positions they found there. The Chinese concentrated the bulk of their assault on the area held by the First and Second platoons. The battle raged around the top of the hill for several hours and ammunition began to run low. At that point Queen remembered the buried cache.

"About 1500 we got a machinegun section from the [1-31st] battalion a sergeant with five guys. They had two light machineguns, [M1919A4] .30 caliber," said



Sergeant First Class Cleveland Valrey was the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the training of the new black recruits coming into the 7th Division. He was elected into the Ranger Hall of Fame in 2005.

"I remember vividly lines of Chinese soldiers marching up the hills on both sides of us, I recall thinking we were headed into trouble."

—SGT Cleveland Valrey

Throughout the night of the 18 May 1951, the 2d Rangers held off repeated Chinese assaults. Using artillery and mortar fire, the Rangers fought off several wave attacks until forced to retreat in the early morning. A short, violent counterattack enabled the Rangers to recapture the hill. *(Illustration by Mariano Santillan)*





Sergeant Joe Oliver awakens on Hill 581. Oliver was wounded during the eight-hour battle, but refused evacuation.



Members of the 2nd Ranger Company clean their equipment. After Hill 581, the Rangers would be engaged in one more fight before all the Ranger companies in Korea would be disbanded in June 1951.

1LT Queen. "I put them in between the two platoons as Cliette's platoon was a little isolated over on the right. We dug up that buried ammo when those guys arrived."[15] The Rangers escorting some of the wounded to the battalion aid station also brought back a resupply of ammunition.[16] The Chinese continued to attack the company position sporadically until midnight, when they dramatically increased the intensity of their assault.

"The Communists came in force about midnight," recalls 1LT Cliette. "Queen continued to call in artillery,



Master Sergeant Lawrence D. West with Corporal Donald L. Felder. WWII veteran West was the 2nd Ranger Company First Sergeant. Felder was one of the youngest members.

and he walked it right up to our position. The [60 mm] mortars were firing into the gaps and the machineguns and BARs [Browning Automatic Rifles] were all engaged."[17] The unrelenting pressure from the Chinese forced the company to withdraw off the hilltop in the early morning hours. The Rangers did not move far and consolidated a short way down the hill.

The Rangers descended the slope about 100 yards and reestablished their defensive perimeter. "We were over on the right and there was a minefield there that kept us from moving straight back down," said PFC Paul T. Lyles, Third Platoon. "1LT Queen pulled us back in behind First Platoon, and then we moved down the hill."[18] When the Rangers had consolidated, they prepared to counterattack.

"We pulled back fifty or a hundred yards, right in front of this other platoon [of the 31st Infantry]. The wounded were walking down. Only [SGT Kirk P.] Adkins was seriously wounded," recalled 1LT James Queen. "I decided we were not going to withdraw any further since we would be going back up the hill again." As dawn broke, Queen organized the company into a skirmish line and led the assault back up the hill.

In the half-light, the Rangers moved quickly uphill and drove the Chinese off the summit in a short, fierce engagement. As he had during the battle that night, Queen continued to call in accurate artillery fire and this, combined with the deadly violence of the Ranger assault, sent the Chinese into a pell-mell retreat. The Rangers re-occupied their former positions and set up their defensive perimeter.



Major General Claude B. Ferenbaugh, Commanding General of the 7th Infantry Division, awards the Silver Star to Corporal Anthony Andrade. Other Rangers awarded the Silver Star were, from left, Sergeant Edward L. Posey and Sergeant Culver V. Gibson.

"A Company [1-31st Infantry] came up and relieved us in the morning,' said acting commander Queen. "It was their commander who made the comment about what you can do if you don't panic."[19] When they were replaced on the line, the Rangers moved down the hill for the final time and headed for the 7th Division rear area. There the company began to rest and recover from their hardfought battle on Hill 581. Soon they were joined by CPT Allen and the men back from R&R in Japan. The company remained attached to the 7th ID until June 1951.

Hill 581 cost the 2nd Ranger Company one man killed and over twenty wounded. Twenty-one Purple Hearts were awarded for the fight on 19 and 20 May.[20] The company later fought its last combat action in a similar engagement on Hill 245. Like the other Ranger companies in Korea, the 2nd was disbanded in June 1951 and most of the soldiers went to the 187th ARCT. The outstanding combat record of the 2nd Ranger Company is a testament to the professionalism and toughness of the "Buffaloes."

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

Endnotes

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2 Charles H. Briscoe, "The 2nd Ranger Infantry Company: "Buffaloes" in Korea 29 December 1950 to 19 May 1951," *Veritas: the Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol 2, No. 1, 2006, 27-38; this article is reproduced in the current issue.

3 The Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) 7-87 of the Ranger Companies called for 5 officers and 107 enlisted men with the authorization to carry a 10% overstrength. Hence the 122 total.

4 Albert Cliette interview, 2nd Ranger Company, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 3 October 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. 3 October 2003.

5 Cleveland Valrey, 2nd Ranger Company, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 16 December 2005, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

6 Corporal William Weathersbee recalls that while on the troopship bringing him back to the United States, he was approached by a number of black 7th ID soldiers who thanked him for the training they received from the Rangers. See Charles H. Briscoe, "The 2nd Ranger Infantry Company: "Buffaloes" in Korea 29 December 1950 to 19 May 1951," *Veritas: the Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol 2, No. 1, 2006, 37.

7 Cliette interview, 3 October 2003. ROKs was the term for Republic of Korea Army soldiers.

8 The exact amount of ammunition is uncertain, no more than a few cans, as the patrol would not carry an excess amount. James Queen, 2nd Ranger Company, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 17 December 2003, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

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16 Posey, 96.

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Captain Warren E. Allen, Company Commander, 2nd Rangers Infantry Company conducting bayonet training for new 7th Infantry Division replacements.

Republic of Korea General Paik Sun-yup

by Charles H. Briscoe

When General Paik Sun-yup came to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 26-27 May 2010, it was an opportunity to interview the Republic of Korea's most decorated veteran of the Korean War, 1950-1954. Trained by the Japanese during World War II, Imperial Army Lieutenant (LT) Paik fought Communist guerrillas in Manchuria and Red Army elements in China. Returning home after the war, Paik joined the Constabulary in South Korea in 1946, two years before it evolved into the ROK Army. Colonel Paik's forward regiment of the 1st ROK Division was crushed at Kaesong during the North Korean invasion on 25-26 June 1950. Just four months later, on 19 October, the 1st ROK Division was the first UN element to enter P'yongyang, the capital of North Korea. COL Paik assisted Task Force INDIANHEAD accomplish its sensitive site exploitation mission. Fourteen months later, Major General (MG) Paik launched the largest anti-guerrilla operation of the war, the six-month long Operation RAT KILLER, to clear south central and southeastern Korea of insurgents. As one of the most experienced anti-guerrilla fighters in the Korean War, General Paik had regular contact with American *ad hoc* special operations forces.



COL Paik Sun-yup stands outside P'yongyang with the Taedong River bridges in the background.

> *"I visited Premier Kim Il Sung's office with the portrait of Stalin on the wall... Russian propaganda was all over the place. The P'yongyang prison was the worst. Its interior courtyard was filled with the bodies of recently killed prisoners."*
>
> *— General Paik Sun-yup*

Colonel (COL) Paik Sun-yup, 1st ROK Division commander, helped Major (MAJ) Jack T. Young, the Assistant G-2 (Intelligence), 2nd Infantry Division (ID) and Ivanhoe Security Force (ISF) commander, get the American-led South Korean elements of Task Force INDIANHEAD across the Taedong River on 19 October 1950. INDIANHEAD was to perform a sensitive site exploitation mission for Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) in the North Korean capital.[1] COL Paik made room in his engineer assault boats to enable two ISF elements led by American Sergeant (SGT) Emmett V. Parker and Corporal (CPL) L. Carl Heesch to search for allied prisoners of war (POWs) and Russian advisors.[2] As a P'yongyang native, COL Paik was familiar with the Taedong River fording sites and pointed them out on a map. MAJ Young took this information and returned to TF INDIANHEAD, halted on the road by the 1st Cavalry Division commander, Major General (MG) Hobart R. Gay. The 1st Cavalry commander was waiting for his engineer boats and would not let TF INDIANHEAD cross before his troops.[3]

Since the 1st ROK Division had hosted the 1st Cavalry when they arrived from Japan and had adjoining defensive sectors in the Pusan Perimeter, COL Paik knew MG Gay quite well and wanted to share the honor of capturing the Communist capital city on 20 October 1950. With 1st ROK units already in the capital on 19 October, COL Paik encountered light resistance as he pushed in from the north. The 1st Cavalry had to fight their way in from the south.[4] Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Ralph L. Foster, G-2, 2nd ID and the TF INDIANHEAD commander, used the northern fords on the Taedong to lead his exploitation force into the city.[5]

After the 1st ROK Division secured the northern half of the city, COL Paik took a patrol through the North Korean government and municipal buildings and facilities and the Soviet military compound and living



The NKPA employed Soviet SU-76 self-propelled 76 mm artillery and T-34 medium tanks. The 1st ROK Division accounted for two SU-76s near Anju in late October 1950.



Red Army Chinese soldiers were readily identifiable to BG Paik Sun-yup because he had fought them in northern China during WWII.

areas. "I visited Premier Kim Il Sung's office with the portrait of Stalin on the wall. I sat behind his desk just like many of the Americans. Russian propaganda was all over the place. The P'yongyang prison was the worst. Its interior courtyard was filled with the bodies of recently killed prisoners. The smell was very bad," remembered General Paik. "Since we had no occupation duties I only spent the night in the capital. MG Frank W. "Shrimp" Milburn, the I Corps commander, awarded me the U.S. Silver Star for my role in capturing P'yongyang."[6]

Early in the morning of 21 October 1950, the 1st ROK Division moved to link-up with the 6th Medium Tank Battalion (MTB) in the vicinity of Sukch'on and at Sunch'on. There, the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) had parachute assaulted on 20 October 1950 to cut off fleeing North Korean officials and the *239th Regiment* and to rescue American POWs being evacuated northward.[7] After linking-up with the 6th MTB on 22 October, the 1st ROK Division followed C Company to Kunu-ri. They recovered forty escaped American POWs whom they evacuated to P'yongyang. On 23 October, now Brigadier General (BG) Paik attacked down the valley of the Ch'ongch'on to Anju, knocking out two T-34 tanks and two SU-76 self-propelled guns. Discovering the bridge across the Ch'ongch'on at Sinanju to be destroyed, Paik put his engineers to work on the last important river barrier south of the northern border. Three days later the ROK II Corps on BG Paik's right flank would receive a major Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) attack.[8]

Just short of Unsan on 25 October, the ROK 1st Division captured the first Chinese soldier taken prisoner by UN forces. He was shipped to P'yongyang for interrogation. Later in the day three more POWs that looked Chinese, spoke Chinese, and understood neither Korean nor Japanese joined him. BG Paik, attending a celebration in the Communist capital, had been privy to their interrogation. After returning to his command post at Yong-byon, north of Unsan, Paik went forward to examine the enemy dead. Having served with the Japanese Manchurian Army in



BG Paik Sun-yup (center) reviews dispositions with his American KMAG (Korea Military Advisory Group) advisor.

World War II, he was well acquainted with Chinese and estimated that there was a Chinese division of 10,000 troops—an all-Chinese force; not part of a mixed Chinese-North Korean element. BG Paik told MG Milburn that there were "many, many Chinese."[9]

At the EUSA forward headquarters ensconced in Kim Il Sung's palace in P'yongyang, the puzzling reports of Chinese troops received little credence until reverses north of the Ch'ongch'on worsened. Then, the EUSA commander, LTG Walton H. Walker, relieved the 1st Cavalry Division of its security mission in the capital and ordered it to pass through the ROK 1st Division and continue the attack to the Yalu River. By then, the ROK II Corps, engulfed by the Chinese, had pulled south, leaving the ROK 1st Division exposed in a salient far north of the UN attack line. The nearest I Corps unit was fifteen air miles to its west. The 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, got its battalions aligned defensively south to north, west of Unsan while the 1st ROK Division had been forced into similarly aligned positions on the east side of the city. By dusk on 1 November, the Chinese had locked the 15th Regiment of the ROK 1st Division in place and were on the north, west, and east sides of the U.S. 8th Cavalry Regiment.[14]

ROK Warrior Leader



This was the 1st ROK Division view of the North Korean checkpoint on the 38th Parallel at Kaesong before the invasion.



When his 12th Regiment was smashed at Kaesong and Yonan, COL Paik Sun-yup, the 1st ROK Division commander joined the 11th and 13th Regiments at Munsan-ni-Korangp'ori.



The Korean Constabulary, advised by 6th Infantry Division officers, began training with U.S. arms and equipment in early 1948, prior to becoming the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA).

Paik Sun-yup was born in Kangso-gun, South P'yongan, Korea, on 23 November 1920. Paik graduated from the missionary P'yongyang Normal School (where he learned English) and volunteered to attend the Mukden Military Academy of Manchukuo (Manchuria). As an officer of the Manchukuo Imperial Army during World War II, he served in the *Gando Special Force* (composed primarily of ethnic Koreans) fighting Communist guerrillas in eastern Manchuria and then Chinese Red Army forces in North China until the Russian military invaded. The Japanese Army first lieutenant decided to return to P'yongyang. After working a few months with the Korean Nationalist Movement, Paik was convinced that the Communists would dominate Russian-controlled North Korea. He headed south to Seoul in February 1946 to enlist in the newly formed American-sponsored Constabulary.[10]

WWII military experience warranted a First Lieutenant's commission and command of a 200-man company. He had to recruit, train, organize, and equip his company with Japanese military weapons. That accomplished, Paik was promoted to captain. The Constabulary initially had advisors from the U.S. Army's 6th Infantry Division performing postwar occupation duty. In August 1948, then MAJ Paik, commanding a 500-man Constabulary battalion advised by the U.S. Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG), became integrated into the Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) under United Nations supervision. A year later, LTC Paik commanded a ROK infantry regiment of 1,500 men, now armed with M1 Garand rifles, M2 carbines, M1918 Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), M1919A2 light machineguns, 60 mm and 81 mm mortars, 2.36" antitank rocket launchers and 37 mm antitank guns left behind by American troops who began leaving Korea in late 1948. They had been trained in tactics and in the use and maintenance of the weapons and equipment by U.S. units before they left country. The ROKA received M3 105 mm howitzers with short barrels, but no tanks.[11]

When the North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) invaded the south on 25 June 1950, COL Paik Sun-yup commanded the ROK 1st Infantry Division. His division of 9,715 soldiers was in defensive positions along the border with the 6th, 7th, and 8th Infantry Divisions. The forward regiment of the 1st ROK Division, the 12th, was destroyed at Kaesong and Yonan on 25-26 June. Only two companies managed to break out and reached division headquarters in Seoul. By then, COL Paik had moved the 11th Regiment into defensive positions with the 13th Regiment at Munsan-ni-Korangp'ori to guard approaches to the Imjin River bridge. After three days, outflanked and threatened with being cut off in the Uijonbu Corridor, COL Paik withdrew his division towards the Han River.[12] Caught north of the river when the Han River bridge was prematurely blown up, COL Paik led his now 5,000-man ROK 1st Infantry Division across the river near Kimpo Airfield on 29 June 1950. He had to abandon his artillery, but brought out the small arms and most crew-served weapons. The 25 June 1950 ROK Army of 98,000 men had lost 44,000 soldiers in the first week of fighting (killed, captured, or missing). Only the 6th and 8th ROK Divisions escaped with their organization, weapons, equipment, and transport relatively intact. The ROK Army survived with only 30 percent of its individual weapons.[13]



MG Paik Sun-yup (L) was awarded the ROK Order of Merit by President Syngman Rhee on 5 November 1951.



Ginseng Hall at Kaesong was the site of the first Korean War Armistice negotiations.



The UN delegates to the first Armistice negotiations in Kaesong were (L to R) MG Henry I. Hodes, Deputy Chief of Staff, Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA), MG Laurence C. Craigie, Vice Commander, Far East Air Forces (FEAF), Vice Adm C. Turner Joy, Commander, Naval Forces, Far East (NFFE), MG Paik Sun-yup, Commander, ROK I Corps, and Rear Adm Arleigh A. Burke, Deputy Chief of Staff, NFFE.

At midnight when I Corps ordered the ROK 1st Division to withdraw, the 15th Regiment had ceased to exist as a combat force. They were to cross the Kuryong River at the ford and pull back along their main supply route (MSR) to Ipsok and Yongbyon.[15] Unfortunately, the CCF had road blocks from the ford southward for several miles. It would be 4 November 1950 before the mauled ROK 1st Division, withdrawing under pressure, managed to cross the Ch'ongch'on River into sanctuary of the bridgehead.[16] On 24 November 1950, now MG Paik led the reconstituted 1st ROK Division north towards Taech'on as the right flank attacking force of I Corps. The EUSA was still confident that the CCF had not intervened in force.[17] That wishful thinking evaporated in less than twenty-four hours.

The major attack of the Chinese Second Phase Offensive smashed into the ROK II Corps during the night of 24-25 November. By noon on the 26th, that front had collapsed. The holding attacks against I Corps were focused on the ROK 1st Division which flanked the ROK II Corps divisions. The size and violence of the attacks did not deter the EUSA staff which just doubled the enemy strength to 101,000 troops opposing them. It was not until 2nd ID regiments became decisively engaged in the IX Corps sector that LTG Walker radioed his corps commanders to withdraw. MG Paik covered the pullback of the 24th and 25th IDs into the Ch'ongch'on bridgehead before the decision was made to abandon Kunu-ri on 29 November.[18] By then, the stage had been set for the 2nd ID debacle south of Kunu-ri.

After LTG Kim, the ROK I Corps commander, was killed in a plane crash on 27 March 1951, MG Paik became the new commander in early April.[19] General Matthew B. Ridgway had been impressed by Paik as a "young and able Korean combat commander," when he was EUSA commander. Thus, he recommended that MG Paik Sun-yup be named the ROK armed forces UN representative at the conference table for the initial negotiations with Communist Chinese and North Koreans at Kaesong on 10 July 1951.[20] Two weeks of very painstaking deliberations finally produced an agenda for the negotiations and MG Paik returned to his corps to join the UN effort to control key terrain along the southern border of the future demilitarized zone (DMZ).

MG Paik conducted the largest anti-guerrilla operation of the war, sardonically labeled RAT KILLER.[21] The three-phase operation in southwestern Korea began on 2 December 1951 when Task Force Paik began shrinking a 163-mile perimeter around Chiri-san. Loudspeaker teams of the EUSA 1st Loudspeaker & Leaflet Company broadcast surrender appeals. "We were used all around the Chiri-san perimeter by ROKs," recalled Corporal (CPL) John A. Squicciarini from Brooklyn, NY. "And, our surrender broadcasts were very effective."[23] After twelve days 1,612 guerrillas had been killed and 1,842 captured. Then, the hunt was shifted north to Cholla Pukto Province into the mountains around Chonju. Seventeen days later, an estimated 4,000 had been killed and another 4,000 captured. Then, in a surprise move MG Paik returned to

Chiri-san to envelop the area in two concentric control rings. By the end of RAT KILLER in mid-March 1952, TF Paik had killed or captured 19,000 guerrillas and bandits.[24] This successful operation led to his promotion to Lieutenant General (LTG) and the ROKA transformation of I Corps into the new II Corps. In July 1952 LTG Paik was appointed to Army Chief of Staff the first time.[25]

LTG Paik participated in all ten of the major campaigns of the Korean War and was the first four-star General in the ROK armed forces. After the Armistice he served as the First Field Army commander, another stint as the Army Chief of Staff, and finally as Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff before retirement in 1960 as the most highly decorated soldier in the the Army. In addition to a U.S. Silver Star for gallantry in action during the capture of P'yongyang, General Paik was awarded four Legion of Merit medals.[26]

More national service followed. Retired General Paik was appointed Ambassador to the Republic of China on Taiwan in 1960, to France in 1961, and to Canada in 1965. As Minister of Transportation from 1969-1971, General Paik started the construction of the Seoul Metropolitan Subway, resolved the hijacking of a JAL (Japan Airlines) plane by Japanese Red Army terrorists at Kimpo Airport in 1970, and initiated the effort to build a national War Memorial at Yongsan.[27]

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the Lodge Act.



These guerrillas and bandits were among the 4,000 captured during Phase I of Operation RAT KILLER.



These are 1st RB&L Group leaflets airdropped to encourage civilian support during Operation RATKILLER.

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A Highly Praised Luxury

The Ranger Infantry Companies in Korea, 1950-1951.

by Kenneth Finlayson

The history of the U.S. Army Ranger Infantry (Airborne) companies was brief, lasting only from August 1950 to October 1951. A total of fourteen companies were activated at Fort Benning, Georgia, with six seeing combat in Korea. Intended to attack targets deep behind enemy lines in the way the North Korean Army employed guerrilla units in the early days of the war, the Ranger companies did not have the impact intended by Army Chief of Staff General (GEN) J. Lawton Collins, when he directed their formation in August 1950.[1] A variety of factors; the changing battlefield environment, the mis-employment of the companies, and resistance in the Army to the Ranger concept, mitigated against their success. Despite being a short-lived experiment, the legacy of the Airborne Ranger companies is today's U.S. Army Ranger School, whose Program of Instruction (POI) evolved from the original six-week Ranger company collective training. The Ranger companies are also an integral part of the lineage of today's 75th Ranger Regiment.

When the first three Ranger companies arrived in Korea in December 1950, the battlefield was fluid, featuring considerable movement by both sides. Three months before, the Allies broke out of the Pusan Perimeter after GEN Douglas A. MacArthur's successful surprise landing behind North Korean lines at Inch'on. The North Korean People's Army (NKPA) retreated north, pushed by the U.S. and Republic of Korea Army (ROK) forces. The situation was ideal for behind-the-lines raids, the Rangers' specialty. The classic examples are the airborne insertion of the 2nd and 4th Ranger Companies with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (ARCT) at Munsan-ni in March 1951, and the 4th Company's small boat assault on the Hwachon Dam the next month. However, before the Ranger Companies reached Korea, the opportunities to conduct these types of missions were fading. When Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) entered the war in strength in November 1950, the prospects for the Rangers diminished as the battle lines gradually hardened along the 38th Parallel. By June 1951, GEN Matthew B. Ridgway, the Commander-in-Chief of UN forces in Korea, realized that the period of effectively employing Ranger companies had passed.[2] To gauge the Ranger's utility across the command, Ridgway queried his subordinate commanders in the spring of 1951 on their effectiveness. The responses were mixed. While the Rangers were generally held in high regard by the units to which they were attached, the concept did not get strong support.

3rd Ranger Company assaulting a Chinese defensive position. The Rangers excelled in lightning attacks against the enemy. When the war of movement ceased and the defensive lines hardened, Ranger effectiveness was greatly reduced.





Men of the 3rd Ranger Infantry Company in combat in Korea.



Students at the Ranger School go through a rigorous program of physical training, including frequent use of the notorious "Darby Queen" obstacle course.

Major General (MG) Clark L. Ruffner, 2nd Infantry Division, commended the 1st Ranger Company: "The unit's performance has been outstanding."[3] MG Claude B. Ferenbaugh, his fellow 7th Infantry Division Commander, was equally impressed with the 2nd Ranger Company. "On every occasion, they were highly praised."[4] Ferenbaugh recommended that Ranger battalions be formed and attached to each division.[5] These two infantry divisions had the longest association with Ranger companies. The 25th Infantry Division Commander, MG William B. Kean, believed the 5th Rangers "have proven their value to this division."[6] Overall, however, these positive comments did not outweigh the negative reports from the majority of Corps and Division commanders.

Lieutenant General (LTG) Frank W. Milburn, I Corps, led the opposition to the concept. He recommended: "American Ranger Companies not be employed in Korea," based on inadequate intelligence and the lack of suitable targets for Ranger missions. Milburn cited difficulty in planning airborne insertions by his divisions. Furthermore, obvious racial differences with Orientals made Rangers easy to detect when operating in rear areas.[7] MG William M. Hoge, IX Corps, cited Ranger limitations in their inability to operate independently without support for sustained periods. He noted unit strength reduced their use in special operations missions. Hoge decried the "creaming" of the infantry divisions of select non-commissioned officer volunteers which deprived units of high quality corporals and sergeants.[8] This was a common complaint as was the inability by infantry divisions to insert the Rangers deep enough behind enemy lines to be effective.[9]

The new 25th ID commander, Brigadier General (BG) J. Sladen Bradley, did not share MG Kean's high opinion of the Rangers: "This company has been employed on what was considered to be proper Ranger missions [by the Division staff] without profitable results and has been a luxury rather than a useful unit. Ranger Company missions do not normally present themselves in the immediate front of the division. Profitable Ranger targets which develop at a greater depth in front of a division are too deep in this mountainous terrain to allow for the commitment of a company size Ranger organization."[10] GEN Ridgway blocked the use of the Rangers against deep battle targets based on the inhumane treatment of prisoners by the NKPA.[11]

The general consensus was that sending and supporting the Ranger companies deep inside enemy territory was beyond the capability of the divisions. The Ranger units were too small for sustained operations. To avoid being totally negative about the Army Chief of Staff's "pet project," most commanders did a quick sidestep and advocated Ranger battalions attached at Corps or Army level as they were in World War II.[12] Based on his findings being reinforced by the field commanders, Ridgway requested permission from GEN Collins to inactivate the Ranger companies in-theater. It was approved by the Army on 2 June 1951.[13] The majority of the Rangers in Korea were reassigned to the 187th ARCT. The remainder were dispersed among the U.S. divisions in theater based on their accumulated combat points.[14] Ranger deactivations in Korea led to the elimination of the Army's eight remaining Ranger companies on 11 October 1951.[15]

With an armistice pending in Korea, the recommendation to form Ranger battalions got little interest in Washington. However, the Army Staff recognized the value of the Ranger training program. LTG Edward H. Brooks, Second U.S. Army spoke up: "We'd have a better combat Army if all the men were graduates of the [Ranger] course."[16] This led GEN J. Lawton Collins to direct that: "Ranger Training be extended to all combat units of the Army in order to develop the capability of carrying out Ranger-type missions in all Infantry units in the Army."[17] The Ranger Training Center at the U.S. Army Infantry School was converted into the Ranger Department in 1952.[18]

Twenty years later, GEN Creighton W. Abrams Jr. resurrected Ranger battalions in the Army. In July 1974, the 1st Battalion, (Ranger) 75th Infantry was activated,



Rangers of the 75th Ranger Regiment on patrol in Iraq. Today's Army Rangers are the finest light infantry in the world.

followed shortly by the 2nd Battalion, (Ranger) 75th Infantry in October. It took another ten years for the Army to expand the Ranger battalion capability. In October 1984, the 3rd Battalion, (Ranger) 75th Infantry was formed and the need for a Ranger Command and Control headquarters was approved in February 1986.[19] Thus between 1951 and 1974, Army Ranger School graduates inculcated these tactics and techniques throughout the Army, as they continue to do today.[20] Born out of necessity in the early days of the Korean War, the collective training of the Ranger companies led to the development of the world's premier light infantry training and leadership course, the Army Ranger School.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

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5 Colonel John G. Van Houten, letter to Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, 16 May 1951, National Archives Record Group 319, Box 380, Entry 95.

6 MG Kean had experience with two Ranger companies. The Eighth Army Rangers were originally attached to the 25th Infantry Division. When the Eighth was disbanded in March 1951, the 5th Ranger Company was attached when they arrived from the United States. EUSA Report, 1 February 1951, National Archives Record Group 319, Box 380, Entry 95.

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20 All infantry soldiers assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment must graduate from the Ranger School before they are awarded the distinctive sand-colored beret.

Rangers of the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment parachute from a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III over Fort Benning, Georgia, 2009.

GHQ Raider Monument

by Eugene G. Piasecki

Sixty years after its creation, twelve veterans of the Korean War's GHQ Raiders, once again closed ranks on 14 July 2010 at the U. S. Army Special Operations Command Memorial Plaza at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. However, instead of facing a hostile enemy, they gathered to donate a monument to the 1st Raider Company, and to commemorate one of the Korean War's early Special Operations legacy units. Comprised of soldiers assigned to post-war occupation duty in Japan, the Raiders' mission was to conduct raiding, commando, and intelligence gathering operations against the Communist forces. Although over eight-hundred men volunteered, only one-hundred were selected and trained at Camp McGill, Japan to perform small boat infiltrations from surface ships and submarines, act as scout swimmers, perform beach reconnaissance and demolitions.

Employed to stage the last major feint to distract North Korean attention before the Inch'on invasion, the Raiders launched rubber boats from the British Royal Navy Frigate HMS *Whitesand Bay* and landed at four separate beach sites at Kunsan one-hundred miles south of Inch'on on 13 September 1950. The success of this operation led Far East Command to assign them to Major General Edward N. "Ned" Almond's X Corps for the amphibious landings at Inch'on and Wonsan. They later conducted anti-guerrilla operations against Communist aggressors at the Chosin Reservoir and Chang-to. Also known as the "X Corps Special Operations Company," the Raiders supported other U. S. services, the ROK Army, South Korean intelligence agents, and the X Corps Special Activities Group's Special Attack Battalion during combat actions. These joint and combined operations typified the Raider's combat activities from their creation on 15 July 1950 until their inactivation on 1 April 1951. Despite their brief existence, the Raiders proved their mettle. Each man in the unit was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge. For its role as part of the Inch'on invasion force, the unit received the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) and the Korean Presidential Unit Citation while attached to the 1st Marine Division.





Lorenzo Ghiglieri

Sailor, Veteran, Artist, Patriot

by Charles H. Briscoe

Born 25 November 1931 in Los Angeles, California, as the second son of a stone carver/marble cutter and artist/musician, Lorenzo E. Ghiglieri graduated from Benjamin Franklin High School in 1949. He attended the Los Angeles Technical Institute and the Frank Wiggins Photographic Trade School on scholarship before serving in the military. Too tall for the U.S. Marine Corps, Lorenzo Ghiglieri enlisted in the U.S. Navy when the Korean War broke out. Recruit Ghiglieri completed Boot Camp in San Diego before assignment to the WWII-era USS *Lowry* (DD-770) as an Ordinary Seaman. While the vessel was in the Norfolk Naval Yard drydock for overhaul after its recommissioning, Seaman Ghiglieri attended Gunnery School at nearby Dam Neck, Virginia.[1]

Slated for duty with the Pacific Fleet serving off Korea, the *Lowry* began training exercises in the Caribbean in August 1951 from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Seaman Ghiglieri proved to be a crack marksman with the .50 caliber machinegun and was assigned as gunner, starboard bridge station, next to twin 20 mm anti-aircraft cannon. During the Caribbean cruise Ghiglieri won the ship's logo contest with his sketch of a tiger "jaw-locked" on a torpedo. Lieutenant Commander Arthur C. Jackson, agreed with his chief petty officer that Seaman Ghiglieri's talent could be put to better use as a combat illustrator rather than as a U.S. Navy machine gunner off Korea."[2]

Assigned to the Command Center, Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, Seaman Ghiglieri "drew all the time" from a painting of Vice President Richard M. Nixon presented "to the next President of the United States" to designing the flag for SACLANT (Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic) and the U.S. Navy gift to Queen Elizabeth II at her coronation (a painting of the heavy cruiser, USS *Baltimore*). During his two and half years of service with Atlantic Command as a staff illustrator and naval painter, the young seaman attended art classes at The College of William & Mary, and was sent to Project Transition at the U.S. Naval School of Architecture & Design in Oxnard, CA.[3]

After his wartime service in the Navy, twenty-two year old Lorenzo Ghiglieri started as a commercial illustrator for an international advertising agency. For twenty years commercial art dominated his life. "Working for Revell, the largest replica plastic model company in America, was a pleasure because they capitalized on my naval illustration experience. I'd served aboard a destroyer and was familiar with sea conditions. I could give 'life' to my ship paintings," said Ghiglieri. "I did so many Sunkist citrus fruit ads, it's a wonder I can still eat oranges. Then, at lunch one day, when I admitted being bored with illustration, a friend suggested that I try sculpture. He told me, 'You have a great eye and good imagination.'"[4]



During Seaman Lorenzo Ghiglieri's first duty assignment aboard the USS *Lowry* (DD-770) he won the ship's logo contest (inset) for his sketch of a tiger "jaw locked" on a torpedo.



While assigned to the USS *Lowry*, Ghiglieri proved to be a crack marksman with the .50 caliber machinegun and served as gunner on the starboard bridge station.



Lorenzo Ghiglieri's "Rising Eagle" serves as guardian of the USASOC Memorial Wall that honors fallen Special Operations Soldiers at Fort Bragg, NC.



Pope John Paul II accepted the "St. Francis of Assissi" sculpture from Lorenzo Ghiglieri.

That encouragement prompted Lorenzo Ghiglieri to expand his artistic talent to the three-dimensional realm. Formal training was followed by long periods in the Alaskan wilderness to immerse himself in the land, observing and documenting wild animals in natural surroundings to produce paintings and sculptures that exuded life and realism. Presentations of art as commercial enterprise evolved into personal passions to inspire and evoke pleasure and appreciation for the strengths demonstrated everyday in nature.[5]

Today, the wildlife artwork of Lorenzo Ghiglieri graces the White House, the Vatican, the Kremlin, and Spain's Royal Palace in Madrid as well as the homes of Luciano Pavarotti, Tiger Woods, and General Norman Schwartzkopf. It was a Veteran and Artist, but most importantly, an American Patriot, who sculpted the "Rising Eagle" that serves as guardian of the USASOC Memorial Wall which honors Our Fallen Special Operations Soldiers at Fort Bragg, NC. Thank you, Lorenzo E. Ghiglieri, for generously sharing your great talent with the U.S. Army Special Operations soldiers, families, and community.



A prolific painter, Ghiglieri specializes in scenes depicting life in the early West and the flora/fauna of exotic locales.



Inspired by Alexander the Great, Mr. Ghiglieri created this sculpture of the famous conqueror.

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

1 Lorenzo E. Ghiglieri, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 26 May 2010, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name.

2 Ghiglieri interview; "USS Lowry (DD-770)" at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Lowry_(DD-770) accessed 6 August 2010; "USS Lowry (DD-770)" at http://www.navsource.org/archives/05/770.htm accessed 6 August 2010; "USS LOWRY (DD-770) Crew, Photos, Links & Deployments" at http://www.hullnumber.com/DD-770 accessed 6 August 2010.

3 Ghiglieri interview.

4 Ghiglieri interview.

5 Ghiglieri interview.

Commander, USASOC
ATTN: AOHS (*Veritas*)
E-2929 Desert Storm Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Upcoming Articles...

ARSOF in the Korean War: Part III

U.S. Army Psywar (Psychological Warfare) started the day after North Korea invaded the South on 25 June 1950. It morphed from the U.S. Far East Command (FECOM) encouragement to the South Korean people to tactical Psywar conducted by the 1st Loudspeaker & Leaflet Company supporting the Eighth Army to strategic Psywar supported by the 1st Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group in support of FECOM and the United Nations Command. Psywar adjusted to the fluid, and then static nature of the war, behind the enemy lines and within friendly areas as the target audience changed. The peace negotiations and Armistice likewise changed the missions of U.S. Army Psywarriors until they departed theater in 1954. Most importantly, the Korean War resuscitated and rebuilt a Psywar capability in the U.S. Army that has continued forward to today's Psychological Operations (PSYOP) that is now a part of MISO (Military Information in Support of Operations.)

